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# B.C. Sikhs caught in nasty mix of religion and nationalism

COURTESY ABBOTSFORD NEWS

*Police maintained a heavy presence in the Abbotsford Sikh temple.*

**James Kwantes**

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — A power struggle is taking place in Sikh temples across B.C. over the issue of whether Sikhs should sit on the floor in the temple dining room, or continue to use chairs and tables, as has been the custom for decades.

Although the dispute is being framed over the issue of tables and chairs, many Sikhs say it has more to do with control of B.C. temples and temple finances than it does with religious practice. And some caught in the middle of the two warring factions say the battle has given Sikhs a bad name in the broader community.

"This is bad, bad for our culture, and gives us a bad reputation," said Sukhjit Brar, a young Sikh father who was serving dinner in the Abbotsford temple on the evening of a long standoff between the two sides.

Brar said the tables and chairs issue is "65 per cent" about money and control of the temple donation boxes. He believes Sikhs should be given a choice in the matter.

## Equality rule

"Who wants to sit on chairs, sit on chairs," Brar said. "Who wants to sit on the floor, sit on the floor."

All Sikh temples have a worship area, in which Sikhs sit on the floor, are blessed by priests, and hear words from the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh scriptures. All Sikhs must remove footwear and have their heads covered (with a turban or cloth) before going into the worship area.

Temples also have a *langar*, a communal dining hall or kitchen where Sikhs eat and socialize. The kitchens are open to Sikhs and members of the public, who are welcome to eat for free.

In India and in most Sikh temples around the world, Sikhs sit on the floor in the dining hall. The practice of everybody sitting at one level goes back hundreds of years, and was intended to refute the Hindu cast system and emphasize the equality of all people, whether priests or laborers.

However, most of the dining halls in B.C. have had tables and chairs for decades, and Sikhs can choose to sit at tables or on mats on the floor while they eat. On April 20, a Sikh priest named Ranjit Singh declared a worldwide edict that tables and chairs should be removed from the dining halls of all Sikh temples. He set a deadline of May 29 for temples to comply with the order.

## Political motives

While traditional Sikhs argued that temples have no choice but to comply with the edict, moderates countered that Singh had fallen prey to fundamentalist Sikh factions and did not have the authority to lay down the order. Tables and chairs remain in about 20 temples in B.C., while they have been removed in a handful of temples.

*See* **SIKH** *page 2...*

# *South African teachers look to Ontario Christian schools for curriculum help*

**Bert Witvoet**

ANCASTER, Ont. — Jim Vreugdenhil is used to spending part of his summers working with Christian school teachers from Ontario on developing Christian curriculum. He is, after all, the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) curriculum co-ordinator for elementary education.

But this summer he is guiding eight Christian school teachers from South Africa as well. All of them teach at the Tshikevha Christian School in the province of Venda. Led by principal Samson Makhado, they hope to be in Ancaster for three weeks., living in residences at Redeemer College and working at the Hamilton District Christian High School during the day.

## Influenced by 'Dutch school'

This is not the first time that Makhado is making contact with OACS. He spent a year (1992-93) studying at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. At that time he also attended a teachers convention at Redeemer College.

Because of this earlier contact with "reformational" thinking, Makhado says he loves

*See* **SOUTH** *page 2...*

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News

# Sikh dispute is 'an issue of control'

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"It's an issue of control and the edict is just an excuse," said Gordie Kahlon, a Sikh moderate from Abbotsford. Kahlon said Sikh traditionalists are using the issue to regain control of temple executives so they can send temple donations back to India to fight for the establishment of a Sikh homeland.

Many who believe tables and chairs should be removed favor the establishment of a separate Sikh homeland in India. Some have ties to the International Sikh Youth Federation, a radical group that law enforcement agencies say is involved in terrorism and channels money from drug-dealing towards the independence movement.

The tables and chairs debate ended in a bloody melee last year at a Surrey temple, where violence broke out after traditionalists tried to forcibly remove tables and chairs. Several Sikhs are facing criminal charges in connection with the dispute.

This year, priests at several temples in B.C.'s Lower Mainland walked off the job the week before the deadline to protest non-compliance with the contentious edict. At the Abbotsford temple, the moderate president scheduled a vote on the edict. But a majority on the executive committee, who favor the removal of the furniture, overturned the decision and cancelled the vote.

The May 29 deadline passed peacefully in Abbotsford, but tensions at the temple remained high on the evening of the 29th and for the entire weekend. City police checked incoming vehicles for weapons, broke up a few scuffles, and maintained a heavy presence.

### Midnight 'stand'-off

On the Sunday, May 31, several hundred moderates sitting on chairs in the dining room refused to leave after evening prayers and were surrounded by traditionalists chanting slogans like "Satnam Vahe Guru!" ("God Almighty's name is true!"). Several of the traditionalists were brought in from temples in other cities for the show of force.

With the standoff entering its fifth hour at midnight, police decided to leave the temple, reasoning that their absence might help end the stalemate. Leaders from the two sides met and mutually agreed that everybody should leave the temple. The traditionalists assured moderates the furniture would not be removed from the temple dining hall.

### Caught on film

But at about 1:30 a.m., after the moderates had been escorted out of the temple and most Sikhs had gone home, a group of fundamentalists gathered behind the temple and loaded the tables and chairs into two waiting cube vans. An *Abbotsford News* photographer who captured the clandestine removal on film was followed back to his car by about 12 young Sikhs, who threatened to harm him if the pictures were published in the newspaper. They surrounded his car, damaged it, and refused to let him leave until he handed over the film.

The photographer managed to rewind the film in his camera, remove it and give a roll of blank film to the Sikhs. The youths ripped the film out of the canister and the photographer and a *News* reporter who was on scene managed to get out of the temple parking lot.

Police charged one of the youths, an 18-year-old, with mischief to property and uttering threats to cause bodily harm in connection with the ugly incident. But the provincial attorney-general's office decided not to lay charges against those who spirited the furniture away to a warehouse. The decision prompted some moderates to charge B.C. Attorney-General Ujjal Dosanjh, a moderate Sikh, with interference in the case.

### Deep split

Since the removal, all Abbotsford Sikhs must now sit on floor mats while they eat. Some moderates have not returned to the temple since the clandestine removal, and some are predicting the formation of another temple.

"It's a very deep split," said Sukh Kahlon, a moderate Sikh, after the clandestine removal of the tables and chairs. Kahlon said Sikh people in B.C. should have been consulted before the edict was handed down, and charged Indian high priest Ranjit Singh with using religion to advance political aims.

"I don't think any religious leader with any foresight would do this," Kahlon noted.

Moderates in Abbotsford decided to fight back in court, and on June 19, a B.C. Supreme Court justice ruled that the Abbotsford temple must hold new executive elections. The existing traditionalist-dominated executive was ruled illegitimate because it was appointed — not elected — in January, contravening provisions of the B.C. Societies Act. A date for the election, in which up to 12,000 Sikhs from Abbotsford and neighboring communities could vote, has not yet been set.

# *South African private schools getting more freedom*

... continued from page 1

Kuyperian thinking and the philosophical ideas of Herman Dooyeweerd. And because of the curriculum work done at his school by Christian school teacher Henny Slopsema from Ontario, Makhado eagerly embraced an offer to develop curriculum for his school alongside Christian teachers here.

The trip was paid for by an anonymous donor from Ontario, and food and lodging was jointly provided by OACS, the Ontario Christian School Teachers Association and the Ontario Christian School Administrators Association.

The teachers were able to free themselves for this work because July is the time for winter holidays in South Africa.

### Room to breathe

What made this curriculum work so opportune was the fact that education is undergoing significant changes in South Africa, changes that allow private schools greater freedom in setting their own curriculum, says Makhado. A recent shift to "outcomes-based education" has opened the way for his school to develop Christian courses, he says.

Vreugdenhil agrees that, although the government directives are written in a sort of dictatorial style, the seven or eight essential outcomes that are to be achieved by the end of Grade 12 are essentially "performance outcomes" that do not put undue restrictions on the content of courses.

That's why he is leading the eight teachers through concepts such as "specific outcomes, performance indicators and skill levels."

One of the first "life skills" units the teachers thought they would develop for Kindergarten was "water." They would address questions such as: how a child uses water; how water must be used sparingly in a province that sees little rain; how water is polluted and dangerous to health; how water assists cleanliness.

### Big chore, big store

The eight teachers hope to develop several more units in the coming weeks so that besides going home with course outlines and ideas, they have gained the experience of how to develop curriculum from a reformational Christian perspective. With 700 students attending Tshikevha Christian School and 34 teachers having to give leadership, their task is rather daunting.

COURTESY OACS

*From l. to r., back row: Sarah Ravele, Angeline Muloiwa, Jim Vreugdenhil, Monica Julies, Samson Makhado, Sam Kaheru; front row: Herman Proper, Elvis Ratshibrumo, Edward Masindi, Alex Nethononda.*

Although the Tshikevha Christian school gets some government funding — 42 per cent of what a public school gets per child, which does not include capital funding — the school is by no means rich in assets. That's why the South Africans bought armfuls of books at the Book Depot in St. Catharines, a warehouse store which specializes in remainders and discounted books in a large variety of subject areas. But when the teachers came to the check-out counter, they were told that they did not have to pay for their books, courtesy of owner John Hultink.

"We should have known beforehand — we would have taken the whole store!" said one of the teachers with a chuckle.

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News

# Paralyzed in car accident, teen now advocates for the disabled

COURTESY CAROL THIESSEN

*Christina Martens at the climbing wall at Shekinah Retreat Centre, in Waldheim, Sask.*

**Carol Thiessen**

SASKATOON, Sask. — A car accident three years ago left Christina Martens, 19, partly paralyzed but it failed to change her positive attitude towards life.

"Being paralyzed is nowhere all there is to me," she said recently from her Saskatoon home. That message — that people with disabilities shouldn't be defined by their disabilities — is one Martens has repeated to numerous church and school groups in the years since the accident.

She has become a passionate advocate for disability awareness — both for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), where she is a theology student.

Martens is "a high energy person who has challenged us to think differently about people with disabilities — to look at the person first," says Elaine Harder, co-ordinator of MCC Saskatchewan's Disability Concerns Program.

"She describes herself as being the same Christy before the accident as after. She does the same things, enjoys the same things, and dislikes the same things she did before (the accident)."

That accident occurred while Martens was a Grade 11 student at Rosthern Junior College in Rosthern, Saskatchewan. She was in a car on the way home to Saskatoon with a group of church youth who had led a worship service in Wymark. Everyone in the car, including the driver, fell asleep. The car wandered across the highway and hit an oncoming truck.

## God's work through a wheelchair

Aside from some broken bones, no one else was seriously injured. But, Martens, who was in the backseat, was left with abdominal injuries and paralysis from her lower hips down.

She spent the next few months recovering in a hospital and learning to care for herself again. "My whole life was changing, but I didn't actually find it terribly sad or terribly difficult because I had such a great support system," Martens says.

She said her parents and four younger sisters treated her as they always had. She also had many visitors from school and her home church, Wildwood Mennonite Church.

Martens said she has never felt bitterness or anger. "If God wants me to be paralyzed, then I'll work with it. And that just means I'll do God's work through my wheelchair," she says matter-of-factly.

## 'Creating accessible lives'

Martens spent last summer working as a volunteer for MCC Saskatchewan's disability concerns program.

She and retired school teacher Laura Kroeger, who has a less noticeable disability from a car accident a few years ago, developed and carried out an education program called "Creating Accessible Lives."

Throughout the summer they shared information and stories with summer campers, elementary school students, and church groups including conducting worship services. "All of that was to increase awareness about disabilities in general," says Martens.

She says everyone — especially youth — responded appreciatively to their presentation. "The thing I've been most surprised about, actually, is how good the youth have been. They can see past the disability so quickly."

## Making headway

Mennonite congregations have made headway in creating accessible buildings, says Harder. "Over the past number of years, many Mennonite congregations have improved accessibility in their church buildings, but have often been slower to respond in making their church life more accessible.

"People with disabilities are often excluded, intentionally or unintentionally, from participating in activities, ministry and leadership opportunities and in decision-making, even when it directly affects them."

Harder notes that it is important for MCC to raise awareness of mental health and disability issues in Mennonite congregations. "We need to recognize the contributions that people with disabilities make within our communities and churches."

MCC can increase this potential for a full, inclusive community by sharing resources and offering opportunities to educate and discuss issues that people with disabilities face within the church, Harder asserts.

Martens, who began studies at CMBC immediately after high school, has also initiated change at the Winnipeg college. This last school year she started a disability and health advocacy committee to create greater awareness on campus.

Anita Pries will chair that committee in the coming school year. The committee's goal is to educate people on campus, as well as advocate for greater wheelchair accessibility. "I think awareness of the mind is the first step," says Pries, who lives in Winnipeg and will be entering her third year at CMBC.

## Change is slow

Becoming friends with Martens at college opened her own eyes to how slowly change occurs. But, she says, Martens is adept at seeing what needs to be accomplished and getting it done.

"She's a very good and important voice for anyone who has health and disability issues," Pries says. "At CMBC she has opened a lot of eyes."

Martens was vice-president of student council and a member of a number of other school committees during the last school year. She also sang in the CMBC ensemble.

Martens says her passion for creating awareness is fueled by her own need for greater access, but believes her communication skills and connections will also help others worse off than herself.

In looking towards the future, and a planned career in accounting, Martens believes she'll always be involved in promoting awareness of health and disability issues. "As long as people still want to listen to me, I'll still talk," she acknowledges.

## *New video helps illuminate disability and health issues*

**Carol Thiessen**

SASKATOON, Sask. — The ordinary lives of people with disabilities have been captured on video, thanks to Christina Martens and Laura Kroeger.

As volunteers with MCC Saskatchewan last summer, the two women interviewed people with various types of disabilities across Saskatchewan. They took photos of each person participating in diverse, yet everyday, activities, such as working at a computer or making crafts.

Martens, who is paralyzed from the lower hips down, and Kroeger, who has a less noticeable disability, used the resulting montage of slides a number of times as part of their larger presentation illuminating disability and health issues.

"We thought it would enhance our own presentation and then it just grew bigger and bigger," Martens says.

Indeed, they turned the package of slides over to the media production department at MCC Canada. The slide set has now been computerized and transferred to video, and includes some animation.

Martens and Kroeger wrote the script and Martens narrates the nine-minute video.

"Creating Accessible Lives" is available, by free loan, from MCC Saskatchewan.

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Guest Editorial

# Dealing with other people's pain

I want to talk about the problem we all have, at times, with other people's pain. Maybe it happens when we feel distress at hearing a baby crying; maybe it's when we have to look away because we see a fellow wincing with back pain; maybe it's when we avoid asking a woman about her mental depression so we don't have to hear how bad she feels. We pull away. But why? And what should we do about it?

Let's begin by remembering certain obvious things about pain. In general, pain is a warning that something is threatening our well-being. God created us all to live, and life includes the will to live and the joy of living. When we feel pain we are compelled by our sense of self-preservation and love of life to remove the cause of our pain or to accommodate it in some way that will not endanger or impair us.

Once we know its cause, we can deal with the threat and do what must be done to restore our well-being. Pain, then, helps us to live to the fullest. Of course, when we deal with terminal illness and death, there is more to be said, but we are not talking about that now.

What I have said about pain so far applies to animals as well as to people. However, there is a distinctively human level of pain which is caused by threats to our spiritual well-being. God's will for our souls is as vital to our lives as is his will for our bodies. If something in our souls is in violation of his will, we will sooner or later feel the pain caused by this conflict, this sin.

The trouble with this level of pain is that it often does not become strong enough to make us change what needs changing until it is almost too late. A person can ignore God and abuse others for a long while before beginning to feel the desolation of deep loneliness. By then, the habits of sin may be too entrenched to change.

### Disciplinary pain

Because of this, parents usually don't merely talk to their children about how they should live, nor do they rely on the often tragically slow pain caused by sin to be the only reinforcement to their talking. Instead, they devise an artificial, pre-emptive, disciplinary pain. They confine their children to their rooms for a time, they withhold a valued privilege, or they cancel cherished plans. Their purpose in using this disciplinary pain is to save their children from the much worse pain that is caused by sin.

God, too, uses this pre-emptive pain, as we can see, for instance, in Hebrews 12:1-13. We correct ourselves with this disciplinary pain as well, both for physical and for spiritual training. For instance, read I Corinthians 9:24-27.

What this disciplinary pain produces is much more important than what caused it. It warns us, when we feel it, about the dangers we face and about the much greater pain we will feel if we don't turn away from such temptations. By listening to its warnings and acting accordingly we develop strengths of character, which make our lives even more productive and joyful.

This is why in Romans 5:3-4 Saint Paul says, "...We also rejoice in sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." This is also why in James 1:2-4 Saint James says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

### Vicarious pain

At this point you may ask the question I often hear, "But why me, Lord?" You are probably not complaining about having your share of disciplinary pain, but asking instead why you seem to have so much more than your share of it. Well, it's a fair question, and some people do, indeed, have much more pain than others. I offer two thoughts about your question.

First, many people are in pain of a sort that you can't see. People suffer much pain which only their closest friends know about. There are many kinds of pain, and few people are spared the experience of pain for long. It is important for all of us to remember this and to be sensitive and compassionate to each other.

Second, the Lord also calls us to bear pain for the sake of others, not just for ourselves. Our Lord suffered so much for us that it makes any comparison to us seem irreverent; but he does, in fact, call us to take up our crosses and follow him, to follow him in his vicarious suffering for others. The "suffering servant" passages in Isaiah are ultimately a description of Jesus' suffering, but they are also a description of how God's most faithful people must suffer for the other wayward members of God's covenant people.

Saint Paul writes about his own suffering for others in Colossians 1: 24: "Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church." Saint Peter, too, says a great deal in his first letter about suffering for others. For example, he calls slaves to submit to their unjust masters because, "to this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

We too may be called to suffer pain, not just to preserve and develop our own souls but also to awaken those of others and to move them to take stock of their own lives. Exactly how the Lord uses our pain to help others is his mystery, but it is what it means to be a member of the Christian community, his Body.

### Turning from pain

Now what about this problem we have in dealing with other people's pain? If their pain is a normal part of human life, whether of body, soul or community, and it is a healthy warning against what threatens them, why do we try to avoid it? Because it's not their pain we turn from but ours. Our own God-given empathy makes us feel what they feel, and we naturally try to remove the cause of our pain. Usually we aren't even aware of what we are doing when we avoid those in pain. Once we realize it, though, we must stop.

As we have seen, part of the reason for others' pain is our discipline. You probably know people who are so impaired in body and mind that they can offer nothing to others but their pain. If we refuse the discipline of sharing their pain, we are denying them their part in the life of the church and, in effect, depriving them of life itself. In the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:31-46) our Lord teaches that he will show himself to us through people in pain, and he expects us to show his compassion to them and to himself in return.

*Jim Vanderlaan is the director of Disability Concerns for the Christian Reformed Pastoral Ministries. He lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.*

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Opinion

# *Christians should not contribute to moral 'dumbing-down'*

**Harry Antonides**

A few readers have quite angrily denounced the Christian Reformed Church in recent issues of *Christian Courier* for insisting that homosexual practices (in distinction from inclination) are morally wrong. Their main arguments (see especially Michael Geisterfer, CC, May 15, and Don Baxter, CC, May 22) are based on secular reasons.

Don Baxter wrote that "medical associations at the national level" have concluded that to help change homosexuals

***"To declare homosexuality to be normal is to underestimate the power of sin, but above all to underestimate the power of God to heal and to renew lives."***

is a form of abuse that deserves professional sanction. That statement flies in the face of the testimony of countless fellow Christians who have experienced the healing touch of a gracious God and been freed from their previous lifestyle, which they knew to be wrong. See, for example, the excellent work done by Christian support groups such as Exodus and New Directions.

## Underestimating sin

To declare homosexuality to be normal is to underestimate the power of sin, but above all to underestimate the power of God to heal and to renew lives. Don't get me wrong — this is a message not only for homosexuals but just as much for heterosexuals who are also called to depend on God's grace and his healing and renewing power. Jesus taught all of us not to cast stones but to repent and to humble ourselves.

The position of the Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), as articulated by Gerald Vandezande in CC of June 26, 1998, also deserves further scrutiny. Gerald is of the opinion that the Supreme Court of Canada was correct in ordering the Alberta government to include "sexual orientation" in its human rights legislation. Then he set out what appears to be a general rule for public policy: "No one should be discriminated against in the experience of their political rights and responsibilities...."

## Rights have a moral anchor

This sweeping statement may fit comfortably within the post-modern mindset where all truth is relative. The problem with this approach to law and public policy is that it is tied to no standards at all.

I can't believe that Gerald really means to say that the equality of rights does not need to be in some way anchored to, and therefore limited by, a certain standard of right and wrong. On this score, there is a fundamental difference between those who believe in a God-given law structure of reality and those who are relativists.

The deep problem we are now facing in Canada is that we are cutting our spiritual roots which, however flawed and imperfect, were nurtured in the soil of the Christian religion. Any society that thinks it can know how to do good without a standard of what is good and just is doomed.

Once one declares equality of rights to be an absolute rule independent of any transcendent concept of right and wrong, the most destructive human appetites will be given free rein. If homosexuality must be sanctioned and protected by law, why not all kinds of practices that any group declares to be right, no matter how outlandish it might be to others. After all, who is to decide what is right or wrong if any group may claim its rights to be sacrosanct within its own understanding? Then adulterous behavior, stealing and killing (think of abortion and euthanasia) may well come within the purview of the new concept of law.

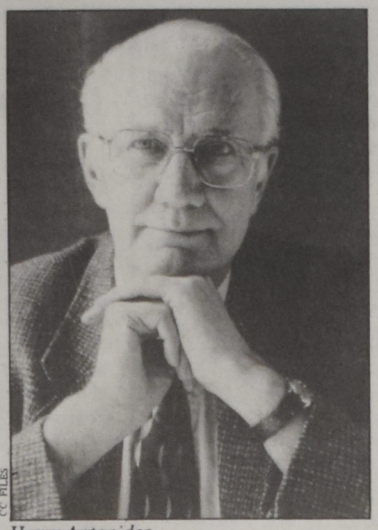
## Charter depends on politics

Gerald Vandezande refers to Trinity Western University's legal defence of its freedom to honor and promote a Christian way of life. He seeks to reassure us that despite the new legislation in support of homosexuality, Christian institutions are protected from outside interference. I'm not so sure. The trend is in the other direction. Delwin Vriend was an employee of a Christian college.

In any case, to be outside of the reach of pro-homosexual public policies will require special exemptions that can be legislated but can also be legislated away. On this point, I fear that there is far too little awareness of the fundamental difference between the more traditional concept of common law and that underlying the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*

A fundamental principle of the original common law regime is that freedoms and constitutional rights are pre-existent to the state. In contrast, the *Charter* is based on the premise that rights and freedoms are creatures of the state. In common law they exist, although they are not codified. Under the *Charter*, they do not exist *unless* they are codified. (This is, of course, not an instant change but a process; a process that feeds on and contributes to the politicization of society — another unfortunate byproduct of the prevailing mindset).

Furthermore, the defenders of the new pro-homosexual legislation seek to reassure us by saying that it only confirms generally existing civil rights that pertain to all people. But that is an unconvincing argument. The new, court-ordained legislation has profound implications for the definition of marriage and the family, the relations between the sexes generally, the



CC FILES

*Harry Antonides*

right of adoption and the way homosexuality is being introduced (and now normalized) in the schools.

What is more, I suspect that it will increasingly proscribe the way social workers, counsellors and therapists will deal with homosexuals. No doubt, the same will apply to journalists and other commentators on public affairs. Keep your eye on the emerging anti-hate legislation.

## It's God's world

It may well be that the trend toward increasing secularization of life in Canada, with all its pathologies and moral dumbing-down, is unstoppable. But Christians and Christian organizations should refuse to contribute to that slide. Let us at least sound the warning and do everything possible to stand against the tide.

Yes, the old antithesis between the Kingdom of God and Satan's realm is still alive. For Christians this begins with the thesis that this is God's world where he has revealed the way of life and not death. We have the responsibility to choose.

## Loving God's law

The main issue regarding the controversy surrounding homosexuality is in one sense very simple: How do we listen to and respond to the Word of God? One Old Testament writer extolled the law and the ordinances of the Lord as the source of life, wisdom and joy. He wrote, "By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward" (Ps.19:11).

Jesus himself put the significance of God's Word to us in these winsome and heartwarming terms: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

May all of us, whether we struggle with sins related to homosexuality or heterosexuality, know the rest that only Jesus can give.

*Harry Antonides is the former director of the Work Research Foundation, the research arm of the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC). He lives in Willowdale, Ont.*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Letter/Column

# Gospel message is its own justification

Thank you, Adrian Peetoom and Mary Vander Vennen ("Two Over 65" columnists), for resuming your letters. I missed your correspondence while Adrian was traveling the world for six months.

After experiencing Chinese culture and the exemplary humanity of an atheist, Adrian Peetoom finds himself unable to be a missionary (C.C. May 22,1998). This he finds unsettling; but the reason why is not clear. He writes, "I would have nothing to say," and "I don't have the words."

However, the context suggests Peetoom is not merely questioning his own gifts, but more seriously whether the Christian church, or perhaps the gospel itself, has any message for the Chinese and for exemplary humanists.

Many of us can relate to Peetoom's concern. We all meet persons whose essential decency, civility and virtues put us to shame. And we all carry guilt about the blemishes that besmirch the history of Christian missions.

### Remember gospel's essence

When this causes doubts about our right to witness, I have found it helpful to remember that the essence of the gospel message has universal application. When the message itself is not in doubt we are free to discuss methodology and mistakes.

The Apostle Paul, perhaps the greatest missionary of all time, had no doubt as to the Gospel's universal application. To him, God's grace in Christ was a message for the Greeks and the barbarians, for the learned and the unlearned. St. Augustine held (and experienced) that no human heart finds rest until it finds rest in God. Billy Graham's autobiography, *Just As I Am,* makes these points exhaustively. This is also what inspired him to bring the gospel to anyone and everyone, anywhere and everywhere. Jesus' own teachings, such as, for example, "Love your enemies" are unique.

### Grace and individual worth

The Dutch missionary Hendrik Kraemer in his book *Why Christianity, of All Religions?* asks what is so special about Christianity as to make us think we have a message for others.

He gives a two-fold answer. First, in Christianity, unlike any of the other world religions, salvation comes by grace — free and undeserved. Secondly, in Christianity, every individual person has infinite worth.

Questions about our right to engage in ministry, missions and evangelism can only be resolved if in great humility we first submit to the essential teachings of the gospel. That is why Mary VanderVennen's response was so appropriate. She merely related how she was led to point her Chinese students to God's love for the whole world. That message is sufficient justification for witnessing, because it is unique.

**Nick Loenen**
**Richmond, B.C.**

News

# Only two chances

DUMFRIES, Va. (EP) — Habitat for Humanity will sell a house built for a convicted killer who was recently charged with kidnapping a 12-year-old girl. The charity had chosen Donald Dannemiller, 39, and his wife and six children for a house. In 1976 Dannemiller was convicted of killing his 13-year-old stepsister, and served five years in prison.

Habitat officials said they learned of Dannemiller's background only after awarding him the five-bedroom home, but decided to let the decision stand and give him a second chance. That second chance expired in May when he was arrested for kidnapping a girl and for shooting her with a pellet gun as she escaped.

## Imajenings

# Camping schmamping

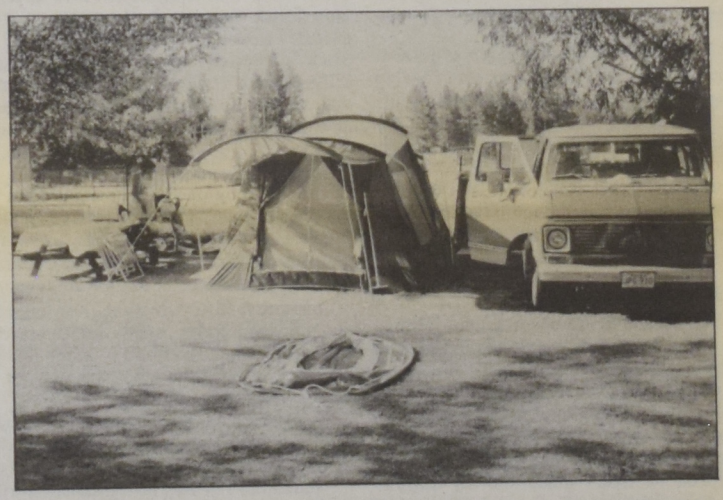
We are home. Along with half the accumulated dirt and sand that made up our campsite!

Okay. It was fun! Sort of. Maybe.

I need a little time and distance here to give myself some perspective. Maybe once the bug bites are a little less irritating and once the kid who slept between us all night is over his croup and once I make it through the pile of laundry and once the effects of too many hot dogs wear off a bit....

How did Moses and all those people manage this for forty years? And without a Coleman stove and lantern?

There's not a lot that speaks of permanence at a campground. The neighbors who seemed so secure in their canvas dwelling place with a welcome mat and a clothesline full of towels and bathing suits disappear, leaving not a trace, in the hour-and-a-half while we are at the beach. No forwarding address.



Already a new tent is forming there before our eyes from the mess of poles and fabric spread all over the ground by "the new people." Close scrutiny by the littlest kid notes quickly that they don't have any kids her age. But, bonus, there is a dog. A friend to play with after all.

All the elements that, thanks to modern conveniences, we never have to think much about in real life are inflicted on campers.

**FIRE. It jumps around the stick** that pokes at the logs and embers in the fire pit where there are blackened marshmallow bits and beer bottle caps (from the people before us?) roasting together. The pilot light on the camp stove stutters, fails, then explodes in a gust that singes unwary eyebrows.

The citronella candle flame dances away from fingers that are drawing with a twig in the yellow wax.The cold lightning of a distant storm bounces on the dark horizon, too far away to hear.

Water. In all of its forms water became highly significant to us campers. Falling on us it put us indoors where shelter was flimsy and only as secure as the tarps strung overhead. Lying still and shining, invitingly, beyond the sand water cooled us as we floated and swam in it.

Out of a glass, water quenched our thirst. In a bucket, we looked through murky water at the creatures that were captured, swimming there. In the cooler a plastic bag thawed and one of us had to go to the camp store to buy more ice. Water boiled in a pan while we held our mugs, each with a big scoop of powder, waiting to be warmed by hot chocolate.

**WIND. It whirled in the trees,** hissing, moaning and creaking in the high branches. It whipped up clouds into frothy foam that made it look like it might just rain. And then the wind blew the clouds away, letting the sun back. The wind sprinkled sand on the beach blanket. It held gulls still, high in the air like kites. It beat the tent flaps. Wind sent the smoke from the firepit up into my face.

While we were camping, the basics came much closer for a while. Something about seeing creation that close up helped us to see and marvel at the incredible works of the Creator all that much more.

While we were camping it was pleasant to sit, to be still, to watch the stars. And the sunset. And the fog that rolled in off the lake. No traffic. No street noises. No telephones or TV. No appointments. No distractions.

While we were camping it was pleasant to know simple joys that can't be bought at any convenience store or mall. A wild flower. A pretty rock. A sweet, shrill song high in a tree. A quiet game. A relaxed smile. A new friend. A chance to rest. A song around the campfire. A prayer in the open air.

Maybe camping isn't all bad. Once I have the sleeping bags aired out, maybe we should go again for a few more days before the summer ends....

*Jen Vanderbeek is a freelance writer and mother of five. With her pastor husband, Peter, she lives in Forest, Ont.*

# Things the movies teach you

* All grocery shopping bags contain at least one loaf of French Bread.

* It's easy for anyone to land a plane, providing there is someone in the control tower to talk you down.

* Once applied, lipstick will never rub off — even while scuba diving.

* All beds have special L-shaped cover sheets which reach up to the armpit level on a woman but only to waist level on the man lying beside her.

* The ventilation system of any building is the perfect hiding place. No one will ever think of looking for you in there and you can travel to any other part of the building you want without difficulty.

* If you need to reload your gun, you will always have more ammunition — even if you haven't been carrying any before now.

* Should you wish to pass yourself off as a German officer, it will not be necessary to speak the language. A German accent will do.

* If your town is threatened by an imminent natural disaster or killer beast, the mayor's first concern will be the tourist trade or the forthcoming art exhibition.

* The Eiffel Tower can be seen from any window in Paris.

* A man will show no pain while taking the most ferocious beating but will wince when a woman tries to clean his wounds.

* If a large pane of glass is visible, someone will be thrown through it before long.

* All telephone numbers in North America begin with the digits 555.

* If being chased through town, you can usually take cover in a passing St. Patrick's Day parade — at any time of the year.

* When paying for a taxi, don't look at your wallet as you take out a bill — just grab one at random and hand it over. It will always be the exact fare.

* Inter-breeding is genetically possible with any creature from elsewhere in the universe.

* Kitchens don't have light switches. When entering a kitchen at night, the open fridge door will light your way.

* If staying in a haunted house, women should investigate any strange noises in their most revealing underwear.

* Word processors never display a cursor on screen but will always say: *Enter Password Now.*

* Cars that crash almost always burst into flames.

* The Chief of Police will always suspend the star detective — or give him or her 48 hours to finish the job.

* A detective can solve a case only after he has been suspended from duty.

* A single match will be sufficient to light up a room the size of Wembley Stadium.

* Medieval peasants had perfect teeth.

* Although in the 20th century it is possible to fire weapons at an object out of our visual range, people of the 23rd century will have lost this technology.

* It is not necessary to say hello or goodbye when beginning or ending phone conversations.

* All bombs are fitted with electronic timing devices with large red readouts so you know exactly when they're going to go off.

* It is always possible to park directly outside the building you are visiting.

* If you decide to start dancing in the street, everyone you bump into will know all the steps.

* Most laptop computers are powerful enough to override the communication systems of any invading alien civilization.

* It does not matter if you are heavily outnumbered in a fight involving martial arts — your enemies will wait patiently to attack you one by one by dancing around in a threatening manner until you have knocked out their predecessors.

* When a man is knocked unconscious by a blow to the head, he will never suffer a concussion or brain damage.

* No one involved in a car chase, hijacking, explosion, volcanic eruption or alien invasion will ever go into shock.

* When they are alone, all foreigners prefer to speak English to each other.

* There's always a chainsaw handy when you need one.

* An electric fence powerful enough to kill a dinosaur will cause no lasting damage to an eight-year-old child.

* Television news bulletins usually contain a story that affects you personally at that precise moment.

*The above was posted to the Internet and distributed via e-mail by Tim Bloedow, who lives in Ottawa.*

# *U.S. Supreme Court: government may deny funds for indecent art*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — The U.S. government can deny grants to artists whose work in considered "indecent," the American Supreme Court ruled June 25. The Court rejected arguments that such a policy violated the free-speech rights of artists.

In an 8-1 decision, the Court said the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) may consider decency as well as artistic merit when making funding decisions.

Writing for the majority, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor said such a policy "neither inherently interferes with First Amendment rights nor violates constitutional vagueness principles."

### 'Decency and respect'

The decision says that Congress did not impose an absolute requirement, but merely provided "advisory language" which "admonishes the NEA merely to take 'decency and respect' into consideration."

Congress adopted the decency standard in 1990 in response to public outcry over federal fundings of such works as Robert Mapplethorpe's homosexual pornography and Andres Serrano's photo of a crucifix submerged in his own urine. The law requires NEA grant-making bodies to consider "general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American public."

The law was challenged by various artists who had been denied funding, including performance artist Karen Finley, best-known for smearing her nude body with chocolate.

The sole dissenter was Justice David H. Souter who said the law is "substantially overbroad and carries with it a significant power to chill artistic production and display."

The NEA welcomed the ruling, insisting that it will have little effect on its day-to-day operations. The NEA has largely stopped giving grants to individual artists, and now primarily distributes its funding through other organizations.

# Christian radio with a difference

OKEHAMPTON, England (EP) — Billed as "Europe's most radical Christian radio station," UCB Cross Rhythms will launch on July 10 as a 24-hour contemporary Christian music station. The station's format will include rock, rap, pop and dance music, along with "challenging spiritual messages."

"I'm genuinely excited about the launch of a radio station that combines some superb, contemporary music with a dynamic message of authentic hope," commented UCB Cross Rhythms station manager, Chris Cole. "We have a God-given opportunity and responsibility to bring the life-changing message of Jesus Christ using contemporary art forms that touch the emotions of a broken generation."

# Shakespeare as priest and spy?

LONDON, England (EP) — William Shakespeare nearly became a Roman Catholic priest and spy, according to Richard Wilson, professor of Renaissance studies at Lancaster University. Wilson plans to join aristocrat Sir Bernard de Hoghton in spending $32 million to create a research and performance centre for Shakespeare in northwest England.

Wilson believes Hoghton Tower was once used as a Jesuit training facility, and that Shakespeare went there at age 16. According to de Hoghton, family legend holds that a young man called Shakeshafte worked for one of his ancestors as a tutor in 1580. If Shakeshafte is Shakespeare, it would mean that England's most revered writer was part of "the secret college and headquarters of the English Counter Reformation," said Wilson. Wilson notes that Stratford was the most Catholic town in the Midlands.

# *Internet impact on church rivals printing press*

GLORIETA, N.M. (EP) — "The Internet may well prove to be the most important thing that has happened to the church since the invention of the printing press," says Jesse Palmer, co-founder and president of Details Communications in Birmingham, Alabama.

Speaking during a "breakout" session at the recent National Innovative Church Leadership Conference held in Glorieta, New Mexico, Palmer said, "While it will never replace the fellowship of God's people gathered for worship and work, it will help us build Christian community, engage in missions and witness, minister to people, develop as disciples and use our gifts in ways we never imagined before."

# Web evangelism guide available

LONDON, England (EP) — Information on using the Internet for evangelism is available through a new "how-to" guide available on the World Wide Web (http://www.brigada.org/today/articles/web-evangelism.html). The guide covers learning more about the Internet, how Web evangelism differs from the printed page, principles of writing pages and testimonies, web pages in other languages, how to use "search engines," witnessing in "newsgroups" and "chat rooms," and many links to related web pages. George Verwer, founder of Operation Mobilization, asserts that the guide "should be read by everyone."

Church

# *Protestant bodies approve 'full communion' agreement*

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — "Full communion" between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) became official June 17 when the Presbyterians approved the accord.

PCUSA stated clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick called the full communion agreement "a major breakthrough" and said the historic agreement "culminates a 30-year search to together find a way to the glory of God to express the unity of Christ's church."

At a news conference preceding the announcement, ELCA bishop Guy Edmiston of Harrisburg, Pa., said, "Out of our shared commitment to the gospel, we've come together after 450 years to say, 'There is nothing that should divide us. We can be in full communion. This is a united witness we make to the world.'" Edmiston co-chaired the ecumenical committee that produced the full communion agreement.

### Act like we agree

The agreement opens the communion celebrations of each denomination to members of the others, without having to agree theologically on exactly what happens in that communion. It also commits the churches to closer co-operation in worship and mission and provides for the exchange of ministers between the churches in accordance with their own polity and requirements.

The clergy exchange provision is the key to the agreement, Edmiston said. "The agreement will be most felt at the local level when there's interchange of clergy. That will happen in urban as well as rural areas. Small churches struggle to hire pastors — joint parishes sharing pastors will make a major impact on all four churches."

Also present for the formal announcement of full communion were Terry White of the United Church of Christ (UCC) and Dan Mattear of the Reformed Church in America (RCA). The Presbyterians have been in full communion with those two churches for many years.

Edmiston outlined ways in which Presbyterians and Lutherans have been working together in anticipation of full communion: joint orientation and training of overseas mission personnel, conversations between Christian educators of both churches about sharing curriculum materials, and talks between various mission agencies of both churches about joint projects.

# 'To change a country, teach the leaders'

**Robert VanderVennen**

TORONTO, Ont. — It's difficult, if not impossible, to send missionaries today to countries like Russia and China. But a kind of Christian "tentmaking" conducted by people in many walks of life, while living a Christian witness, can be dramatically effective.

The press has reported Boris Yeltsin's cabinet reshuffle, in which Sergei Kiriyenko, 35, was named prime minister. What has not been reported is that Kiriyenko took an intensive course in marketing, finance and business management at Nizhny Novgorod State University taught by American professor Brian Burnett, and that Burnett was able to present the Gospel to Kiriyenko and his classmates, and to teach the course from a Christian worldview.

Burnett says, "When I went to Russia, I knew I would be teaching the leaders of tomorrow. That's why the work of the International Institute for Christian Studies (IICS) is so strategic and so unique."

REUTERS

*Sergei Kiriyenko, Russia's new prime minister, heard the Gospel from American professor Brian Burnett.*

IICS is the American partner of Christian Studies International (CSI), the Canadian agency which has the same vision and which provides the means for Canadians Dr. Adrian and Dr. Wendy Helleman to teach at Moscow State University.

Another young man who was a student of IICS professor Bob Young at the same Russian university was converted to the Christian faith through Young's work. This man is now the second in command under Mayor Nimtsov in the massive city government of Moscow itself.

IICS and Christian Studies International use as a slogan, "To change a country, teach the leaders ... to teach the leaders, go to the universities." The truth of this is borne out in the stories of these two Russian students.

More tentmaking professors are needed, as are the funds to support them.

*For more information contact CSI at One Massey Square, Suite 1910, Toronto, Ontario M4C 5L4.*

## *'Mother Mike' is first Inuit woman priest*

IQALUIT, NWT — Rev. Lois Mike is the first, and so far only, Inuit woman priest in the four million square kilometres that comprise the Arctic Diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada. But breaking the gender barrier among native clergy has not come easily, the *Globe and Mail* reports. On the day of her first sermon, a colleague next to her opened his Bible to a passage declaring that women should not speak in church.

"They also have nicknames for me," says Mike. "They call me Father Lois or Mother Mike."

Mike first began to consider the priesthood in 1986, three years after she had renewed her commitment to the church.

"God kept telling me over and over to come to his office," she explains. "I realized that what he was really talking about was for me to *get* an office."

Lois Mike preaches at St. Jude's, an igloo-shaped church once visited by the Queen.

## French Prayer book is costliest ever

LONDON, England (EP) — A 13th century French prayer book made for a crusader was sold June 23 for $4.6 million at Sotheby's auction house. It was the highest price ever paid for any French manuscript, and the third-highest ever for an illuminated manuscript of any kind. The book, called the Burdett Psalter, was probably commissioned by Jean de Villiers, grand master of the Knights of St. John, who led an unsuccessful crusade to Israel in 1291.

## *France says JWs are a cult*

PARIS, France (EP) — The French government has rejected tax-exempt status for the Jehovah's Witness group, ruling that it is a cult rather than a legitimate religion. Authorities are seeking $50 million in back taxes from the group. In a statement, the church asserted it would "fight this discriminatory decision in the courts" and added: "The Jehovah's Witnesses, as far as taxes are concerned, ask to be treated in the same way as the other Christian religions."

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***For our Calendar of Events, please turn to page 19***

# *Heavy-metal rocker turns to Irish-Scottish influenced praise*

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (EP) — Jeffrey Fenholt, whose professional career has included stints with heavy metal rockers Black Sabbath and as the original lead in the Broadway show "Jesus Christ Superstar," has come a long way from his heavy metal roots. Fenholt, now a Christian who travels the country as a musician and evangelist, is finishing an album named *Celtic Glory*, which mixes Irish and Scottish influences with Fenholt's up-tempo praise music and rock.

Fenholt is best known for his past connection with the secular heavy metal rock band Black Sabbath — a connection the band once denied. Fenholt spent several months recording and writing songs for the band, but then left due to "artistic differences." He is not credited on any of the group's albums, and never toured with the group.

Still, even that tenuous connection draws a crowd. "It's amazing how many kids are still into some of the rock stuff," says Fenholt. "We get big crowds. But I think it's important for people to know that it's not going to be a heavy rock concert. We have definitely gone a different direction with this. It's up-tempo fun."

### Escaped living fast, dying young

He continues, "We're standing on Malachi 4:6: 'In the last days he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers,' I want to see adults reach out to young people and see if we can't eradicate some of these problems that are going on in some kids' lives."

Fenholt knows about the problems young people face from his own troubled childhood. "I never had any ambitions to do anything spiritual or godly," he says. "I figured I'd be dead by now — from the pills, and from the rage inside me that drove to do things. I would do anything — take pills, get drunk and drive fast, get on airplanes and fly to Europe just to party for a few weeks. I thought I'd live fast and die young, and I really didn't care."

### On a new track

His life changed when some men came to pray for him — and he's spent his life since then trying to bring a similar change to the lives of others. He's been giving Christian concerts for about a decade, and is the founder of Students for Christ, a ministry that encourages the formation of student-initiated Bible study clubs in public high schools.

Fenholt's mother once sued him and five ministries, saying she was being defamed by Fenholt's stories of an abusive upbringing. "She wound up getting saved and dropping the lawsuit," says Fenholt, who notes that his relationship with his mother has been restored.

Fenholt's troubled background has given him a special desire to reach kids who are struggling. "We hope to draw in people who are hurting," he concludes. "I have a tendency to draw baby-boomers, but we always get a large group of high school and college students as well. I try to target the people who are pretty much down and out, in trouble."

# Submission

## Chapter & Verse

● Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

*"Submit yourselves, then, to God."— (James 4:7)*

Friends in Alberta used to tell of an uncle who married late in life. His bride was a feisty widow who sparkled with energy. The wedding took place on a farm in the old family home.

At the appropriate moment in the ceremony the pastor asked the bride, "Do you promise to love, honor, and obey him?"

She hesitated, face scrunched in thought. "Love and honor — yes!" she finally responded. "Obey — no!"

Both the pastor and the groom were taken aback. What to do now?

It was the groom who broke the impasse. "Two out of three isn't bad," he said, and the wedding went on!

### Saving face

Obedience and submission are scarce commodities in most of our lives. There are probably at least two reasons for that. For one thing, we are self-made people. Early in life we make it clear that "I do it myself!" We have a need to be right, a need to save face. One of my friends has a cartoon on his office door that pictures a senior official standing grimly in front of a subordinate's desk. The boss is saying: "I didn't say it was your fault; I said I was going to blame you!"

There is a lot of that in all of our lives. Since Adam and Eve passed the blame along to others, we all try to outwit reality in order to save face. We need to be right. We need to be strong. We need to be identified as "winners" rather than "losers." Submission is for the weaklings, not the strong.

### Saving space

A second reason we hesitate to submit to anyone else is that we don't know if we can trust the other person. One man in his middle years can recount to me every promise his father made to him, and then broke, when he was a lad. To this day he finds it hard to trust God. After all, as a wise person has noted, "'Daddy' is the name for God on the lips of a child." When parents fail us (and they always will), we learn mistrust in the religious core of our beings. In order to keep from getting hurt we won't submit, even to God.

Wise pastors have always known that. Yet they encourage people to trust and submit because it is the essence of who we are as humans in our relationship to the Creator of the universe. In the early church a teaching tale put it like this: a young girl lived with her parents in a cottage at the edge of a dense forest. "Don't wander too far into the woods," they told her. "You might get lost."

Yet a warm summer's day, with birds singing and winds calling, carried the girl's feet deeper and deeper into the cool underbrush. The shadows were long before she realized how lost she was. Yelling and crying, she dashed one way and the next, not finding home, and working herself into convulsions of panic.

Meanwhile, her parents were worried as well. In the dusk of evening they called her name and made forays into the woods. As thoughts of all the worst fates attacked them, they organized villagers and other neighbors into search parties.

By dawn the young girl was sleeping, exhausted, on a bed of pine needles, and only her father was left of the many searchers. As he stumbled into the clearing and saw her, his footsteps broke branches and sent birds twittering. The noise awoke her and she saw him. Jumping to her feet she ran toward him, arms outstretched. "Daddy! Daddy!" she cried. "I found you!"

### Saving grace

So it is in our lives. When we finally find God, "on our own," as we might say, it is a moment of great excitement for us. Yet when the whole story is told us again, in our later years, we realize just how patient and persistent has been God's own search for us.

At that point we no longer need to put on religious airs. And then, submission sounds like a natural thing.

*Wayne Brouwer is senior pastor at Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich.*

# Russian people need 'love in an envelope'

GARDEN GROVE, Calif. (EP) — As Russia continues to lurch from one crisis to the next, a Southern California-based ministry has issued an urgent appeal for North American Christians to become involved in a huge pen pal project with Russian believers to help bring some "spiritual stability" to Christians in the country.

ASSIST Ministries (Aid to Saints in Strategic Times) of Garden Grove, California, is urging Christians from all over the West to consider becoming involved with recent believers in the former Soviet Union through a "Bridge of Friendship" program.

### 'Peace dividend'

ASSIST has the names of thousands of Russians seeking Christian pen-pals and prayer partners. Many of them are young people who accepted Christ through television programs broadcast in Russia by the Christian Broadcasting Network.

"Now they want to grow in their new-found faith with the help of a Christian from the West," Wooding explained.

"We call the aim of the project 'Love Tucked Inside An Envelope,'" continued Wooding. "This is a wonderful 'peace dividend' that has come out since the fall of communism in the Soviet Union. This is a 'Bridge of Friendship' we need to walk across."

*For more information about ASSIST's "Bridge of Friendship" program, write to: ASSIST, P.O. Box 2126, Garden Grove, CA 92842, or call (714) 530-6598.*

# *Vatican posts surplus*

VATICAN CITY (EP) — The Vatican announced in late June that it was in the black for the fifth consecutive year in 1997, largely due to increased contributions from local churches and a solid return on investments. The Vatican, which lost money for 23 straight years before 1993, ended 1997 with a surplus of nearly $11 million.

True Story

# The day Andy forgave me

## A true story about suicide, guilt and God's love

***How do you tell your brother that, although you saved his life, you actually wanted him to die. The author was the youngest child in the family and Andy was the oldest. Andy would tell his youngest sister that she could not get married and have kids because he was not married and did not have kids. Nancy was sick of her brother and his suicidal thoughts.***

***Then something very dramatic happened one day. Nancy wrote about it in a story assignment for her Grade 11 English class at London District Christian Secondary School. That was in 1984. The story, entitled "Save Him," was written from a 15-year-old girl's point of view. Nancy, who is now 30, recently shared that story, which is the story within this story, with her church cell group. She also said that 15 years after writing that story she finally had the nerve to tell her brother what had really happened.***

**Nancy Mostert**

Church cell groups are small Bible study groups that get together, share God's Word and pray. Our cell group has been studying prayer. How to pray. What to pray. Learning God's will in prayer. Discussing when and how God answers prayer.

One way to show how God answers prayers is in relating personal experiences. I recently related an experience of mine to my cell group. The impact this had on them prompts me to share with others how God, in his magnificent grace, answers prayers and purifies us for the building of his Kingdom.

First, let me share with you the story I wrote as a Grade 11 student, which underlies my prayer, "Father purify my heart."

## Save him

Tension grips his entire body as he paces the kitchen floor. His pale face reflects an odious expression. This is my oldest brother, someone I love, yet hate. I watch him closely as his muscles harden with his internal thoughts.

He jolts suddenly, as if concluding something, and heads for the front door. Before leaving, he fastens his hard yet searching eyes on me, seeking confidence in me, his youngest sister. I know what is coming but am determined not to let it get to me, not this time.

Speaking at me but to himself he mutters the words I most fear. They cut hard into my heart, deeper than ever before. "I am leaving now." A short pause make the words more threatening, "This time it's for good. When I walk out that door it will be the last time you will ever see me, because this time ... this time I am going to do it." With that, Andy shoves the door open and stalks out.

Shocked, I stand in the doorway and watch his tense figure lumber down the street. How does a man in his mentally disturbed state find words so well chosen and painful? I slam the door in anger. Furious thoughts race through my head leaving me shaken.

*This is just another of his ways to get attention, to have someone feel sorry for him.* I tell myself. *No way is this going to bother me. I won't let it. He has stormed out threatening suicide umpteen times before and has always returned in one piece. I mean, what can he do? He hasn't got a gun. He is likely just going to his friend, Richard, to help on the farm. There he will dreamily think about the day when his disability will escape and allow him to have a farm of his own.*

**I pick up my dust cloth,** and return to my housework. This is not the first time Andy has informed me about suicide intentions. I cannot understand why he wants to do it. He is not mentally retarded, not really, just a slow learner who can't accept his limitations — especially when his younger brother and sisters accomplish things he will never master. Yet it must be more than that.

*Oh, who cares what his problem is. He's a jerk! He's always doing abnormal things. He really is starting to get on my nerves. For once I wish he would just do it. End it all so we can have some peace from his self pity.*

Mom comes in, interrupting my thoughts, asking where Andy is. Looking up at her, I hiss, "He's gone out to kill himself." Sensing my fear, Mom speaks in a soft comforting Dutch accent.

"Vel, Nancy, he does dat all the time. You know how it is, he leaves for a couple ov hours and comes home happier dan ever. Don't vorry about it."

She is not convincing. In her eyes I can see the worry. When he has done this before he's tried everything from lying on the road waiting for someone to hit him to taking overdoses of aspirin, Tylenol or his own lithium. Repeatedly we've found him passed out on the ground. He would be rushed to the hospital and have his stomach pumped. We both knew that Andy might just be more serious this time than any other.

"Mom, I am sick of it. Sure, he has never succeeded before, but it still scares me. This time it's going to break me before it kills him. I am sick of dealing with this. I wish he would just get the whole thing over with. I wish he would just do it! I wish ...."

"*Nou zeg*, stop it!" Mom's voice rises into high pitch. Her stern eyes scold me. "Andy is your brother. Don't talk like dat. God put him on this earth for a purpose. You will yust have to try to accept his problems. God loves all of his children and it is not your right to wish him dead."

**I know Mom is right**, but this Christian viewpoint does not appeal to my 15-year-old mind in the least. I continue dusting furiously.

*God did put him here for a purpose, but what is it? It can't be a good purpose. I mean, look at what he's doing to me? I can't even get my head straight and I'm supposed to be in my fun years. Very soon I will be thinking of suicide, so it may as well be him. I am supposed to love him, not wish him dead. Oh, but God, there is no reason for his being here. Save him and us from our misery. Let him die!*

The housework almost done, I pick up the dust mop to clean under the bed. Glancing out of the window for a moment, I see the tense figure of my brother coming toward home.

> God did put him here for a purpose, but what is it? It can't be a good purpose. I mean, look at what he's doing to me.

His strides are big, his arms swinging back and forth as they would in an army march. He looks like an eager soldier, ready for an attack. Yet, on whom? Himself, I hope. *Go ahead, big brother, attack!*

The housework done, I take the mop out onto the porch to shake out the dust, noticing for the first time what a glorious day it is. It feels good to be outside. Just then my eyes catch sight of Andy leaning awkwardly against the tree, with toe tips just touching the ground, his pants soaked with urine.

"Hey, what are you doing? Come on Andy, there's a bathroom in the house, you know."

I quickly peer around to make sure no neighbors see Andy making a public nuisance of himself.

He doesn't respond. Mom, having heard me yell, jolts past me toward the tree. There is panic in her movement. Her face suddenly pales, her mouth drops open, she shrieks as she comes to his side.

"What ... what's wrong, Mom? What's going on?" My voice squeaks as fear seizes my body.

"Don't come here! Nancy, please don't come! He is dead! O, dear God, my son is dead!"

Confused, I stumble to her side. I stand stunned, my face paling. Bailer twine hanging from the second branch of the maple tree, is attached tightly around Andy's neck. His face is blue and a limp tongue hangs out across his purple lips.

I just stand there, staring, not knowing what to do. Without conscious thought I leave and return with the sharp kitchen scissors. Handing the scissors to Mom, I step back, making way for her to saw through the rope. As she cuts through the rope her son's body falls to the ground with a thud. I drop to my knees, placing my ear against his heart. I listen intently ... no sound.

I can't do anything. Well ... CPR? I don't know. My head is swarming with confusion. Faint voices come in succession from every corner of my brain,, but there is one in particular. This strange voice comes from my heart. It is something other than me. I am not thinking the things I am hearing in my head, but they are so real.

"Go ahead; do it, Nancy. CPR will work." The voice speaks, patiently, comfortingly, in an almost heavenly tone. I ignore it. I have never learned CPR but have often seen it done on the Blue Cross T.V. commercials. I could do it, but, no, I had better not.

"You can revive him. I have a purpose for him. Andy can be revived." Again the strange voice enters my head. I argue with it.

*I can't do it. I don't know how. I don't want to. He's dead, out of my life. He won't bother me ever*

*again.*

"You can save him. I have a purpose."

*Shut up! He's dead. He is finally out of my way. He has finally accomplished something his brother and sisters never have.*

"Andy can be revived." The patient voice keeps pleading and urging. Before I know it, I am tilting Andy's head back, pinching his nose and blowing air forcefully into his mouth. One and two and three and four. I pump desperately on his chest. After I repeat the CPR method three or four times, he coughs, sucking in, gasping for air. I roll him on his side and let the bile ooze out of his mouth onto the ground.

Surprised by my own action, I crawl back to my feet. Someone must have called for an ambulance for its attendants run quickly toward the maple tree with a stretcher. The oxygen they provide Andy soon takes over from my CPR. Racing quickly back to the vehicle with Andy riding on the stretcher, they fight valiantly to keep him alive. The ambulance roars off.

I watch until the sound of the siren fades in the distance. I turn away as neighbors crowding in for part of the action smack me on the back. I hear their muttered congratulations for saving Andy's life. It sickens me to hear their praises. I had no intention of doing it.

I break away from them and run into the house. I cannot accept the praise. I did not want him around anymore. I did not save him. I couldn't have. I mean, it was my physical self, but my heart surely was not in it. I did not save him. It was that voice, that something other than me. That voice took total control of me. As long as I live I will never pride myself for rescuing my brother.

I sit, looking out of the window, thinking over the events, trying to understand how I could have done it. Then comes the dim recognition that I had done God's will. I see no purpose for Andy to live, but obviously God does. It was God who worked in me to save him. God's spirit breathed in Andy the gift of life.

Gazing through hazy eyes, my attention focuses on the bailer twine that now swings idly in the wind. I sense the pain which drove him to hang himself, and I find a place in my heart for Andy.

I understand that if he had died I would have more pain, greater pain than I do now, because I do love him. I must tell him. I swallow hard, tears trickle down my face as I speak aloud. "I'm glad you are alive, Andy, and I love you. Join with me in thanking God for the grace of sparing your life."...

**Until recently I believed** I had left behind the turmoil of that day when I wrote down my story for that English class assignment. The writing worked as a sort of healing, you might say.

As the years passed, I grew in the Christian faith. God's spirit continued its work and led me to a point of seeking purification of my heart, a renewing of the mind.

Andy would often tell me, "Nancy, you should have left me on that tree." With this came a nagging thought that Andy needed to be told how I really felt that day.

As though having learned nothing, I argued with God again. How on earth do you tell someone face to face that you had wished him dead? I could understand forgiving Andy, but why should I ask him to forgive *me*? What had *I* done to him?

Through Scripture reading and prayer God continued to place on my heart the need to confess and seek forgiveness. I began to realize that unknowingly I had placed Andy in bondage. If I knew he was coming home to Mom and Dad's for a weekend, I purposefully stayed away. I never called him. Never wrote to him. Never went to his home. Never invited him to mine.

I continued to let Andy suffer the guilt of thinking, "Look what I put my family through," while I held on to the most wonderful revelation for him — that it was not me, but the grace and love of God through his Spirit who saved Andy.

Following months of struggle and putting off being with Andy, there came the inevitable day when we were together at our parents' house for the weekend. That was last year. The urge to talk to him was stronger than ever. Yet I drew back at every opportunity, still arguing with myself.

> 'You can revive him. I have a purpose for him. Andy can be revived.' Again the strange voice enters my head. I argue with it.

**In bed late Saturday** evening, I began to pray. My prayer led to a desire to experience freedom in Christ. Before long I was praying a full-fledged plea to speak with Andy and confess. Yet, still arguing with God I prayed: "If that's what you *really* want, Lord, then make the opportunity obvious."

Late evening prayer time quickly became early morning prayer, and I had to go to the bathroom. At Mom and Dad's house that meant creeping through a tiny hallway into a small adjoining bedroom down 14 steep and creaky stairs through the 20-foot kitchen, past the pantry, through the recreation room and around the corner to the bathroom — a long dark journey.

Downstairs, it was, as I expected, very dark and quiet. Everyone had gone to bed. Finishing in the bathroom I opened the door. There standing before me was Andy.

"Nancy, how did you feel about that time I hung myself?" The question hit me like a ton of bricks. Talk about an immediate answer to prayer! It could not have been more obvious. Neither of us had ever spoken together about it since that day.

Andy and I spent two hours confessing, sharing, crying and laughing. He was not shocked when I told him that I had wished he had succeeded with his suicide attempt. And he forgave me. Andy came to the realization that God loved him so very much, that instead of Andy dying on that maple tree 15 years ago, God had sent his own Son to die on Calvary's tree 2,000 years ago. God's Spirit had saved him.

I came to realize that 15 years of suppressing God's quiet urging had built up a wall so high that tearing it down was painful. I had been leaning on that wall for 15 years. It had given me the excuse not to have to deal with Andy. This resistance had kept me from allowing him into my life. It had kept him from having the freedom to live without guilt over what he had done. I began to realize that even though I had argued with God about his will, he, in his grace, had provided me every opportunity to purify my heart.

Sharing this experience with my church-cell members was not as matter of fact as I had thought. In the telling of my story, tears had streamed down my face and I was enveloped by a sense of awe at Christ's sacrifice — his sacrifice for *me*.

PHOTOS COURTESY NANCY MOSTERT

***Nancy Mostert with Andy.***

*Nancy Mostert, a mother of three, and soon to become a mother of two more, lives in Hamilton, Ont., with her cabinet-making husband, Henry. She has written this story in full consultation with her brother and family.*

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Poetry

# The poetry of Marian Morford

## I Am

*My heart leaps within me*
*as I hear the voice*
*of the One who calls me...*
*the One who knows me*
*the One whose burden*
*I am...*

*The One who calls me*
*who reminds me...*
*equips me to be all*
*I am...*

*The One who answers every question*
*and questions every answer*
*I am.*

*The One by whom*
*nothing is created*
*but everything is being created*

*The One who is not created*
*but always creating*

*Never beginning and never ending*
*but always becoming*

*Never less and never more*
*but always complete*

*The name is not*
*He Was*
*or*
*He Will Be*
*but I Am*

*The Lord, not of yesterday*
*or tomorrow*
*but of today...*
*the inverted face of eternity.*

*My heart*
*beats*
*at the pulse of your name:*
*I Am*
*I Am*
*I Am....*

## Always Moving — Always Still

*The pattern of the steps*
*on the busy sidewalk*
*reminds me of the wind*
*blowing through the trees*
*pulling the leaves off*
*one by one*
*falling and spinning*
*only to land*
*face down in the lake*
*always moving, always still.*

## Hush

*Horses run*
*like swiftly shifting shadows*
*in the still morning air —*
*thin puffs of breath*
*as white as the mountains behind them*

## Northwest Rain

Each drop
falls
like a face
from the faceless mist,
the locals don't use rain gear
because the rain
becomes a permanent part of the landscape,
as solid as any tree
as mobile
and as still
as any tide.

With its own rhythm
drip by drip
percolating through space
it hits our windshields
and our heads,
with determined gentleness,
a softly eternal
tapping on the shoulder
blearing our vision
that seemed so clear
only a moment ago....

CRAIG VANDERLENDE

## For such a time as this

How could you not love me
when the rain comes down
when the flowers sing
and the umbrellas sprout

When my heart rings for you
like a bell true and round
the wind carries its tune
like a flute inside out

Intentions, like lost shadows,
flex their fingers without a sound,
even the best can be forgotten,
faith steps over fear and stumbles over doubt.

One teaspoon at a time
life makes its way back into the ground
leaving memories, like rags, upon edges of hearts
like an arrow, causing less pain in than on the way out.

## The DNA Stomp

*One foot, one day behind the other*
*eat, sleep, work*
*the spiral dance of distraction*
*one ear listening*
*both hands*
*tying*
*untying*
*taut strings of time*

*Marian Morford teaches English & humanities (film and Native American literature) in the Puget Sound region of the Pacific Northwest. She says: "I like to hike, ride my bike, climb trees and listen to blues and old musicals. I also attend First Presbyterian Church where I occasionally help in the nursery (age 2 and under) and, more often, teach adult Sunday school. My faith, like my poetry, is like grappling in process (like the angel and Israel).... Satan is real to me, as is absolute Glory."*

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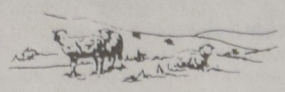
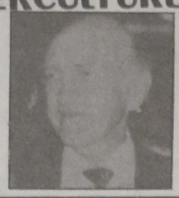




# Pick ye dandelions while ye may

There is a time for everything, as Ecclesiastes says. I think I am learning that work shouldn't have automatic priority even when there are pressing deadlines or fleeting opportunities.

One of my nieces apparently once told her mother, "When we go to visit at the farm we stand around and watch Uncle Vern work." I often think about that astute observation and it has helped me to pull my nose away from any (pre)occupation and pay attention when there is opportunity for friendship.

When the sheep are having their lambs it is the busiest time of the year for me. For three to four weeks lambing requires a daily 18-hour vigil, and in bad weather, longer hours. I am bone weary when it is over, even though I do have extra help. This year our two granddaughters visited for a few days during lambing and Rachel, who is four years old, involved herself in the work. "We have to do so much work on the farm!" she exclaimed.

PHOTOS COURTESY VERN GLEDDIE

### Ceremony for the commonplace

One morning one of my helpers threw a small dead lamb out the back window just as Rachel came by. She immediately stopped, made some inquiries about the cause of death and, concerned about the flies on it, picked up the lamb. My wife, Wilma, and I were near the house when she came walking, wearing her aunt's sweatshirt with sleeves dangling down, the dead lamb enshrouded among the shirt folds.

"I want to bury this lamb so I will see it in heaven," she said, and, sensing a special moment, I got the spade. In solemn procession Wilma and I accompanied her to the garden, whereupon I received detailed instructions on digging the hole: "A little deeper, Grandpa" and "A little more deeper." When the hole was dug to satisfaction, Rachel requested we gather flowers to put in the grave with the lamb. So during the busiest time of the year Grandma and Grandpa picked fistfuls of dandilions. The flowers were scattered over the little body at the bottom of the hole and we carefully covered it with the loose dirt. I found a special stick to mark the site and then I had to leave. But by then Aunt Stacey had arrived on the scene and she was conscripted into putting lilacs on the mound, saying a few words and singing. Rachel returned to the gravesite several times to sit and sing.

### Each thing in its place

I don't want to make too much of the event, but I would like to think that Grandma and Grandpa demonstrated they would be there if at all possible during the important moments of Rachel's life. I suppose I could have quoted meaningful shepherd analogies from the Bible to make a lesson. I did not think of that possibility until much later and then ruled it out as not right for a four-year-old at that moment. I am not entirely sure, either, of what her interest was, because when we had finished helping her she said, "I want to do it over and over again."

Some say that farming is a business. It does have a business aspect to which I must pay attention to survive. Farming is so much more than that, but it is not my whole life. Farming is of course *important* to my life. But when my work becomes too important I miss out on life-changing opportunities for my own spiritual growth and service to others.

A long-term view is essential to our survival and that of our children, and making the most of the present is integral to the future.

*Vern Gleddie is a sheep rancher near Edmonton, Alta.*

Voortman

Over 40 Varieties of Fine Cookies

## How do you react when your daughter says: 'I'm pregnant'?

Peter and Marja are IN

**Dear P & M:**

*I read your June 5 column about your sabbatical in which you informed us that your daughter, a Calvin College student, had a baby, with your help and support. Does that mean that there's no husband or boyfriend in the picture?*

*What is this world coming to! Even girls who attend Christian high schools or colleges get pregnant. Didn't you tell your children that premarital sex is a sin? I know God is forgiving, but I still think it is wrong. By the way, one of my grandchildren also became pregnant. I just find it all very upsetting, and that's probably why I felt the need to write.*

**Dear Understandably Upset:**

Initially, we also found the news of our daughter's pregnancy to be very upsetting. We found ourselves grieving the loss of the kind of future which we had pictured for her. We had envisioned graduation followed by a career in her chosen field. We hoped that she might fall in love, get married someday and then, within the context of marriage, have a child. How different it would have been if she would have been married for a time and then come to us with the news that she was pregnant. We would have jumped sky high for joy! As it was, our first reaction was one of despair and disappointment.

By God's grace, however, we controlled our reaction, expressing our disappointment but still reaching out in love. We shed tears and we hugged each other. It meant a lot to us to hear our daughter say that she was nervous but not scared about telling us the news because she knew we'd come through for her.

Unfortunately, the father of the child faded out of the picture quickly. Our advice to couples in such situations has always been to delay marriage until they know that they are fully committed to each other, child or no child. We told our daughter that she's better off being happy and single than miserable and married for the wrong reasons to the wrong person.

Without a partner and plagued with constant morning sickness she somehow pulled off her best academic semester. She said it was because the Lord gave her strength and because she was committed to providing a good future for her child.

**When we joined her in January** and February, we experienced tremendous closeness and bonding which paved the way for us to be excited about our grandchild's arrival. Each prenatal class, each day spent together, helped us to accept the reality of the situation. When Jasmine was finally born we shed tears of joy and jumped sky high after all. God moved us far beyond reluctant acceptance; he literally turned our mourning into dancing.

This summer our daughter is courageously completing her last three courses at Calvin while we look after her little girl for the 11 weeks that this final push for her BA will take. The separation is hard on her, but she's doing it. We are proud of her for her resolution and thankful for the tremendous support that she is receiving from Calvin faculty and staff, and from her home church, Jubilee Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines.

Did we talk to our children about premarital sex? Definitely. Does Peter use his catechism classes, also attended by our daughters, to encourage abstinence, and to explain God's will for sex? Absolutely. Is getting pregnant outside of wedlock a sin? Yes, even when a couple is deeply committed to each other. But the birth of every child is still a gift, a miracle of creation to be anticipated and embraced.

**Our children need to learn** God's standards from us. They also need to see God's compassion and love in us. If they don't see that, they might seek an abortion or have the child and give it up for adoption without ever telling their parents. "Perfect love casts out all fear," and most children who know they are loved will eventually overcome their fears and admit their mistakes. We say "most" because there will always be some children who just can't face their parents' disappointment. To them we say: don't go it alone. Reach out for help to a Christian agency that deals with unexpected pregnancies. Reach out for help from your parents, believing that the Lord forgives and that he enables parents to come to the place of acceptance and celebration where we find ourselves today.

What is the world coming to? To what it has always been. Since Jasmine's birth we have become aware of different Christian families struggling with the same news. It's a scene as old as this broken world.

The bigger question is: Where does the world need to go for help? The answer to that is older than the universe. We need to go to "the Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin" (Ex. 34:6). Then, when your daughter tearfully informs you, "Mom, Dad, I'm pregnant," or your son nervously tells you, "Mom, Dad, I've made someone pregnant," you will know what to do and what to say.

**Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.**

*Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.*

# Death can't keep Rich Mullins from shining at Cornerstone

BUSHNELL, Ill. (EP) — Gospel musician Rich Mullins died in a car accident last year, but that didn't keep him from stealing the show at the 1998 Cornerstone Music Festival. Coinciding with the release of Mullins' final album, *The Jesus Record,* friends of Mullins' gathered at the festival to perform his songs and share memories of their departed friend.

Participating in the July 3 performance were members of Mullins' Ragamuffin Band, including Jimmy Abegg, Aaron Smith, Mark Robertson and Rick Elias, who also produced the album. They were joined by a number of old friends, including Ashley Cleveland, Mitch McVicker (who survived the accident with Rich), the Kid Brothers of St. Frank, Greg and Rebecca Sparks, This Train, and Sixpence None the Richer.

David Mullins, Rich's brother, introduced the set. With the same boyish looks and easy manner as his brother, and a voice eerily similar to Rich's, David Mullins thanked the crowd for prayers on behalf of the family. Many artists talked about sharing songs with Mullins, and how he gave honest assessments of them. More than once the audience heard, "This was Rich's favorite song of ours."

### One last offering

*The Jesus Record* itself was a work in progress for more than two years. Mullins had approached Rick Elias about producing an album, wanting to do something different than past projects. After Mullins' death, Elias and others wondered if they should attempt to complete the album. After talking to the band members, Elias decided to go ahead and produce it.

The result is a two-CD set. On one, various artists perform Rich's songs with a variety of instruments Mullins fans have come to love: recorders, dulcimers and more traditional instruments as well.

Artists include Elias, Phil Keaggy, Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith and others. One additional song, "A Man of No Reputation," written and performed by Elias, was added — a song Mullins once said he couldn't sing without getting choked up. The final song on this CD, "That Where I Am You May Also Be" begins with Mullins singing accompanied only by his guitar. It grows as other artists join him in the background, and then Michael W. Smith takes over the lead vocals, carrying on what Mullins started.

### Unique vision

The second CD in the set is Mullins singing most of the same songs alone, accompanied by either guitar or piano. The songs were recorded nine days before his death on a battery-operated boombox in a church.

Commenting on the impact Mullins' music continues to have, Elias said, "I think Rich was the most significant Christian artist of the last 10-15 years — or certainly one of them. His fans connected with him on a deeper level. Rich was blessed with an audience and a unique vision that his audience resonated with."

Elias insists that *The Jesus Record* is not about Mullins, but about the God he sang and wrote about. "This is not a tribute record," Elias concluded. "We wanted to honor our friend, but this is a record about Jesus. Rich was prone to the same human shortcomings as all of us. He chose to rise above them and point to Jesus."

**Shade must be provided for a goldfish tank because goldfish have no eyelids.**

**The word smog is a blend of the words smoke and fog.**

# Classifieds

## Classified Rates

**(Revised February 1, 1995)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Births | $25.00 |
| Marriages & Engagements | $40.00 |
| Anniversaries | $45.00 |
| 2-column anniversaries | $90.00 |
| Obituaries | $45.00 |
| Notes of thanks | $35.00 |
| Birthdays | $40.00 |

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

**Note:** All rates shown above are GST inclusive

**ATTENTION!**

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

**NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS**

We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

**Christian Courier**
**4-261 Martindale Rd.**
**St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**
**Phone: (905) 682-8311**
**Fax: (905) 682-8313**

E-mail: ccadverts@aol.com

## Personal

**ONE TO ANOTHER**

Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue $5.

Write to:
**#12 923 2nd Ave. S.**
**Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7**

## Thank You

**EIGENBROOD:**

We wish to thank our family and friends for their best wishes on our 50th wedding anniversary. We thank God for His goodness!

**Henk and Annie Eigenbrood.**

## Anniversaries

1958 1998

With hearts full of praise and thanks to our saving God, we,

**LLOYD and KARIN BURGHART**

hope to celebrate our 40th anniversary on Aug. 16. The Lord has given us many and varied experiences during our years together in teaching and in ministry. We hope to celebrate this occasion with our many friends and family members on August 14. Our five children and seven grandchildren will be joining us in spirit if not in body.

Enid Watson — Haverhill, Mass.
John & Janice Malek — Norridgewock, Maine
Rebecca, Julia, Matthew, Anna
Mike & Carole Malek — Durham, N.C.
Chris & Jason Fenn — London, Ont.
Les & Jan Burghart — London, Ont.
Cody, Jade, Brooklyn

Address: 4729 - 55 Avenue, Rimbey, Alta.
Mail: Box 994, Rimbey, AB T0C 2J0
e-mail: peaksime@www.black-elk.com

New Dundee Kincardine
1953 Aug. 4 1998

With praise and thanks to God, we announce the 45th wedding anniversary of

**ALBERT and MAY HEEMSBERGEN**
**(nee DAMSMA)**

Congratulations Mom and Dad, Opa and Oma!

Ronnie († 1963-1982)
Brenda & Sab Abate — Arthur, Ont.
Stacy, Anthony

Open house on Aug. 15, 1998, at the Point Clark Community Centre from 2 - 4 p.m.

Best wishes only, please.

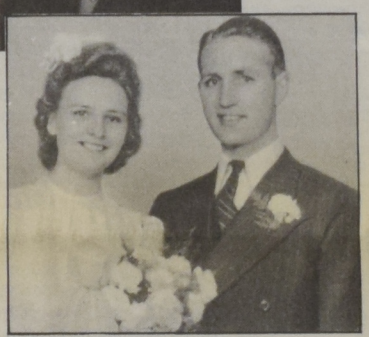
Home address: 711 WalPole Trail, Point Clark, R.R. 1, Kincardine, ON N2Z 2X3

Look for Peter and Marja on page 15...

## Anniversaries

Our parents and grandparents
**MARTIN and WILHELMINA VERKUYL**
**(KNIBBE)**
are married 50 years.

Woodstock, Ont. Holland Marsh, Ont.
April 7, 1998 April 7, 1948



Their life's experience: "God is our refuge and strenght, an ever present help in trouble" (Ps. 46).

Their wedding text: "I am the Lord your God" (Ex.20:1).

We are very thankful for all God's blessings on their life these 50 years and would like to invite all their acquaintances, friends and relatives to help us celebrate this happy event at an open house reception in their honor on Saturday, **Aug. 8, 1998**, from 2 - 4 p.m., at the home farm near Hickson, Ont., 13th line of EZT (just south of County Rd. 8). Your presence will be the best present you can give them.

Their grateful children and grandchildren:
**Tony & Brenda Verkuyl**
Kate, Mark, Sue, Ken, Alexandra
**Ida & Hans Strikwerda**
Winona, Annette, Rachel, Stephen, Arend, Philip
**Mary Jane & Ben Hofstede**
Benjamin, Angela, Daniel, Christopher
**John & Gloria Verkuyl**
Joseph, Eli, James
**Connie & Wayne Collins**
Jillian, Mackenzie
Home address: R.R. 6, Woodstock, ON N4S 7W1

## For Rent

Students, are you planning to study in **London, Ont.**, next year (University of Western Ontario or Fanshawe College) and needing a place to stay? We offer housing that is close to both institutions and would welcome inquiries. Please feel free to contact us by phone: **(519) 660-0922** evenings, **(519) 672-9217** days, fax: **(519) 672-3140** or e-mail: **talsma@skyia.com**

## Miscellaneous

**CLINTON, ONTARIO**
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available 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call **(519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.**

## Anniversaries

Castrolanda Sarnia
Parana Brazil Ont.
1958 August 6 1998

"With the Lord on my side, I will not fear" (Ps.118:6a).

With joy in our hearts and thanksgiving to God, we are happy to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

**GERRIT and PATRICIA WASSINK**
**(nee DIJKSTRA)**

Congratulations Mom and Dad, Grandpa and Grandma, with love:

Didi & Harry Van Klaveren — Sarnia, Ont.
Kristin, Elysia, Karel, Gerrit
Johan & Wendy Wassink — Kitchener, Ont.
Shawn, Jessica, Stephen, Meghan
Fred & Trish Wassink — London, Ont.
Nathan, Jenda, Jori, Andrea
Ingrid & Fred Johnston — Owen Sound, Ont.
Calvin, Philip, Danae
Dianne & John Van Rooyen — Windsor, Ont.
Darren, Joel, Lauren, Stephen

We hope to celebrate with an open house on Saturday, Aug. 8, 1998, at 7 p.m., at Second Chr. Ref. Church, corner of Pontiac and Exmouth, Sarnia, Ont.

Best wishes only, please.

Home address: 31 Michael Snow Crt., Sarnia, ON N7W 1B8
E-mail: gerpat@excelco.on.ca

## Obituaries

Buer Lucknow
Germany Ont.
Aug. 14, 1912 - July 8, 1998

"What is your only comfort in life and death?" (Lord's Day 1).

**ELDERT GEERTSMA**

passed away, after a short battle with cancer, in his 86th year.

Loving wife, Grace Geertsma.

Dear father of:
Hermina & Hank Dyk — Blyth
Greta & Leo Vanderley — Orangeville
Tina & Jack Sytsma — Caledonia
Peter & Marj Geertsma — Brunner
Oeds & Ruth Geertsma — Lucknow
John & Linda Geertsma — Chesley
Jim & Marvel Geertsma — Fordwich
Jane & Rodney Fitzsimmons — Chesley
Mary & John Dykstra — Sauble Beach
Maureen & John Peet — Goderich

Also loved by 31 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Predeceased by two brothers in the Netherlands. Survived by one half-sister and two half-brothers in the Netherlands.

Funeral conducted by intern Steve Tamming, in the Lucknow Chr. Ref. Church, on July 11, 1998.

Correspondence address: Box 482, Lucknow, ON N0G 2H0

# Classifieds

## Teachers

**ALLISTON, Ont.: Alliston Community Chr. School** invites applications from qualified applicants for a **75 - 80% Grade 8 teaching position in core subjects**. This position commences in September 1998. Ability to teach French is an asset. Submit full applications, as soon as possible to:

**Alliston Community Chr. School**
**Teacher Applications**
**4428 Adjala-Tecumseth Townline**
**P.O. Box 592**
**Alliston, ON L9R 1V7**

**FRUITLAND, Ont.: Fruitland John Knox Memorial Chr. School** invites applications for a **37.5% part-time Administrator Relief Teacher** for the 1998-1999 school year. The ideal candidate will possess a valid provincial or state teacher certificate, a Christian School Teacher Certificate (CSTC) and have a few years of successful teaching experience in Grade 6 to 8. Persons interested in this position should contact: **Mr. J. de Jager, Principal, at (905) 643-2460** in order to receive application forms. Applications will be received until the position has been filled.

**LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Chr. School**, approx. 385 students in K-9, located in central Alberta, invites applications for a qualified teacher for a **part-time Grade 5** position. Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Please send resume to:

**Martin Folkerts**
**Lacombe Chr. School**
**5206 - 58 Street**
**Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9**
**Phone: (403) 782-6531**
**Fax: (403) 782-5760**

**OAKVILLE, Ont.: Oakville Chr. School** requires a **full-time Junior Kindergarten teacher** and a **part-time teacher's assistant** for September 1998. Please send a letter of application and resume to:

**The Principal**
**Oakville Chr. School**
**112 Third Line**
**Oakville, ON L6L 3Z6**

Why not take advantage of our **Calendar of Events** for your next event?

## Church News

**Christian Reformed Church**

**Call accepted:**
— to St. Albert CRC, Alta., **Rev. John Luth** of Barrie, Ont.

**Classis meetings:**
— **Classis Huron** will meet **Sept. 9, 1998, in the Clinton CRC, Ont.**, at 9:30 a.m. Send all materials for the printed agenda to the Stated Clerk (Herman Jonker, 108 Erinbrook Dr., Kitchener, ON N2E 3C4) no later than Aug. 5, 1998.

— **Classis Niagara** is scheduled to meet **Sept. 16, 1998, in the Trinity CRC, St. Catharines, Ont.**, at 9 a.m. Agenda items, including requests to address Classis, should be available to the Stated Clerk by Aug. 12, 1998.
John TeBrake, Stated Clerk.

## Miscellaneous

Flights

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Head Office

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7:30 a.m. MT & AT
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Lethbridge, Alberta
9:30 a.m. and a repeat in evening
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Web page: www.ehjjshow.com

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
CRC
Contact:
R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

## Miscellaneous

**ADA REALTY LTD.**
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*Sid Vandermeulen*
Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district.
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**Please take advantage of our monthly Business Directory. For the low cost of**
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**(Please add 7% GST).**

**What if one day next week you couldn't Speak?**

Or maybe you couldn't walk. Or your vision was blurred. That's what it's like to live with multiple sclerosis, an unpredictable disease of the central nervous system. Things you take for granted can become impossible and you don't know when or where or if it will strike again. But the research and services programs of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada are providing some answers. With your help, we can connect with a cure.

**1-800-268-7582**
**Multiple Sclerosis**
Society of Canada

## Job Opportunities

**Christian Courier**
is seeking a full-time

**Promotions & Marketing Director**

who will focus on:
- generating advertising
- raising subscriptions
- developing a donor base.

The successful applicant will have:
- a commitment to Christian journalism
- fine organizational ability
- excellent communication skills
- computer literacy
- energy and enthusiasm
- the ability to be a team player, yet able to work independently.

Salary commensurate with experience.
Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Fax your letter of application, resume and two references to
**(905) 682-8313, attention: Bert Witvoet, Editor.**

## Support Reformed Faith Witness (RFW)

**Mission Statement:** *Reformed Faith Witness is a Christian ministry committed to communicate biblical perspectives on current and world events in accordance with Reformed traditions.*

**Make a donation for 1998!**

Reformed Faith Witness, the new publisher of *Christian Courier*, is a charitable organization which received tax exempt status from Revenue Canada.
Please consider making a financial gift for 1998. All contributions will be used to help *Christian Courier* and the cause of Reformed Christian journalism. Send your cheque and complete the coupon below and we will issue an official receipt. Thank you very much!

**COUPON** **COUPON**

**To: Reformed Faith Witness** Registration No. 89131 6093 RR0001
**4-261 Martindale Road**
**St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

❑ Yes, please enter my/our name on your mailing list and keep me/us informed about Reformed Faith Witness.
❑ I/we enclose a donation payable to Reformed Faith Witness. Please send receipt.

**Name:** _____ **Amount:** _____
**Address:** _____
**City/Town:** _____ **Code:** _____

*P.S.: CC subscription and advertising payments are not tax deductible. Only amounts of $10 or over clearly designated to **Reformed Faith Witness** will be officially receipted.*

## Classifieds

| Job Opportunities | Miscellaneous |
|---|---|

ONTARIO CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

invites applications for a part-time **Executive Secretary** for the 1998-1999 school year. The ideal candidate will be a person with strong secretarial and administrative experience. He or she is also familiar with the management of the OACSS-member schools. OCSAA requires this person to attend up to 15 meetings per year in the Greater Hamilton area and then to administer secretarial and administrative tasks for up to an additional 35 days per year.

Persons interested in this position should contact **Mr. J. de Jager, OCSAA Secretary at (905) 643-2460 or 643-2121** in order to receive additional information. Applications will be received until **Sept. 15, 1998.**

If you are looking for an exciting position in Christian education, are a self-motivated individual and appreciate working for school principals, then this position may be for you!

The **Board of Seaway Ministry of Classes Eastern Canada and Quinte** invites applicants for a

**CHAPLAIN TO SEAFARERS**

position in **Montreal harbor**. Must have a heart for evangelism and gifts in cross-cultural ministry. Facility with languages a plus. Responsibilities include presenting the gospel to seafarers, through visiting ships, engaging in spiritual conversation at the Centre, leading in public worship and devotions, and promoting the ministry among the churches. Chaplain must work well with staff and volunteers. Ordination and ministry experience are assets. **Contact Rev. Charles Kooger, P.O. Box 520, Frankford, ON K0K 2C0, (613) 398-7681 or ckooger@reach.net by Aug. 31, 1998.**

**Miscellaneous**

*Having difficulty paying for a CC subscription?*

Please contact us if you (or someone you know) cannot afford the subscription price, but want to receive *Christian Courier*. Let us know how much you are able to pay

You may contact:

**Stan de Jong, Manager**
**Christian Courier**
**4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**
**Phone: (905) 682-8311 or Fax: (905) 682-8313**

*The following letter is addressed to members of the Christian Reformed Church, written at the direction of the church's synod to inform members about events and church actions related to the financial collapse of IRM Corporation in Concord, California.*

**July 9, 1998**

# Dear Fellow Members of the Christian Reformed Church:

This letter comes to you at the direction of the synod of the Christian Reformed Church which met in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 13-18, 1998. It is written in response to the many questions and concerns raised by churches and individuals within our denomination. The synod's finance advisory committee, and then synod itself, spent considerable time reviewing the circumstances surrounding the failed investments of several denominational agencies in the IRM Corporation of Concord, California. Synod 1998 chose the means of this letter to inform and communicate with everyone within the Christian Reformed Church about this most unfortunate situation.

Synod expressed its deep regret for the pain that many are experiencing as a result of this business failure. It recognized that this pain is not only being experienced by those who have contributed to the ministries of the agencies involved, but also by the many individual members of the Christian Reformed Church who hold IRM investments. It is synod's understanding that there is little hope for any substantial recovery of the investments lost. Synod sincerely regrets that denominational funds were invested in these speculative ventures, and pledges that, through the Board of Trustees, it will continue to monitor and deal with this situation as circumstances warrant.

Synod was asked by overture to "establish an independent review committee" to study the conduct and circumstances surrounding the investment decisions made. Such an evaluation of the agencies has already been conducted by the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church. Synod has expressed its appreciation to the board members and various denominational staff members for the decisive action taken to deal with this very difficult situation. Many extra hours and a great deal of energy have been spent by board members and staff (especially those who are serving on the continuing Creditors' Committee) in an effort to protect the investments of all the investors (both private and institutional).

While synod recognizes and deeply regrets the financial errors made by certain agencies, it is satisfied that appropriate information is being communicated to the churches and that nothing is being withheld in order to protect any individuals or organizations. It is also confident that the Board of Trustees' adoption and implementation of the new investment policy is an appropriate corrective measure to prevent a similar occurrence in the future.

Perhaps this information still leaves some in the Christian Reformed Church with an uneasy feeling. While such feelings are understandable, synod is hopeful that everyone will support the efforts of synod and the Board of Trustees as they seek to bring some relief from the suffering and loss related to this entire matter.

The synod saw the present financial health of the agencies as a sign of the church's trust in and generosity toward these ministries. All of the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church are continuing to labor on your behalf around the world. As God's people contribute generously to this work, the kingdom of God continues to expand. For this, synod was profoundly grateful.

Synod earnestly requests your prayers in support of those who are victims of this tragic failure and for those who are working diligently to resolve these matters and recover the losses. In many places deacons are being called on to assist those who have been financially devastated by their lost investments in IRM. Please assist your deacons in any way you can.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to write to Dr. Peter Borgdorff, executive director of ministries, at 2850 Kalamazoo Avenue SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560.

Sincerely in Christ,

**Rev. Howard Vanderwell, President**
**Rev. Jack B. Vos, Vice-President**
**Mr. Stanley Koster, First Clerk**
**Rev. Peter Nicolai, Second Clerk**

## Classifieds

# Calendar of Events

**Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.**

**July 13-31** ICS/Wycliffe-sponsored Summer School, 229 College St., **Toronto**, Ont. For more info. contact John Franklin at (416) 979-2331. Toll free 1-888-326-5347. E-mail: franklin@ultratech.net

**to July 31** All seniors in Niagara (+60) are invited to enjoy a complimentary day of fishing (or relax and bring a picnic lunch in a park-like setting). Senior days run during July/98. Call ahead to book your day. Phone Desy's Fish Farm, **Welland**, Ont., tel. (905) 892-8990 or fax (905) 892-1797. (#)

**Aug. 7-10** ICS Ontario Summer Conference, featuring Dr. Bob Goudzwaard on the theme: "Proclaim Jubilee: A New Beginning." At the Maple Grove Christian Retreat Centre, **Thamesford**, Ont. Info.: (416) 979-2331 or e-mail: ics@icscanada.edu

**Aug. 10 & 17** VISION TV reprises the two-part special: "Gerald Vandezande: A Voice of Faith in the Public Square," on August 10 and 17, at 10.30 p.m. (ET/PT).


**Christian Courier is throwing caution to the wind and extending a special introductory subscription to people under 40. You may be a newlywed, a student, a single person or a couple with or without kids. As long as you are somewhere between adolescence and middle age, you may subscribe at the ridiculously low price of**

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# A short "Computer Dictionary"

**Baud:** Used to refer to the speed of a modem. Another term is bps.
**Bit:** Binary digit. A single "switch" inside the computer which is either a one or a zero. Millions of these tiny "switches" are the basis for all memory and information storage functions.
**Boot:** Turning on your computer is called "booting" it up. When you shut down and re-start immediately you're "re-booting".
**BPS:** Bits Per Second. The speed at which your computer can communicate (via its modem) with another. Modem rates of speed are measured in bps. A 28,800 bps modem will "send out" roughly 28,800 words per minute – wpm.
**Byte:** Eight bits. A byte is one character stored in the computer – or one unit of information. For that reason, bytes are used as a measure of storage (as kilobytes and megabytes) to define how much information a particular computer is capable of storing in memory.
**Cache:** A specialized type of buffer, cache improves performance by storing information read from the drive in high-speed random access memory (RAM).
**Clock-speed:** Usually found in the "feeds and speeds" specification box. This is the measure of how fast a computer can "think" via its microprocessor. This speed is measured in MHz (megahertz) or millions of cycles per second.
**CPU:** Central Processing Unit. Another term for the microprocessor or "brain". It is located in the console.
**DVD-ROM:** Digital Video Disc-Read Only Memory. Provides up to 25 times the capacity of CD-ROM discs, and offers digital quality pictures for superior multimedia.
**Expansion slot/ISA expansion slot:** (ISA – Industry Standard Approved). A "connector" inside the computer which allows you or a technician to plug in an additional expansion card.
**Feeds and Speeds:** The technical facts pertaining to the PC, such as hard drive size, microprocessor speeds, amount of memory, etc.
**Gigabyte:** One billion bytes – or 1000MB (megabytes).
**Hard drive:** This is the storage device that "lives" inside your computer and holds all the information in the computer. Information can be copied off the hard drive onto floppy disks and vice versa.
**Icon:** A small picture on your screen that represents a program.
**Kbps:** Kilo bps. Thousands of bits per second.
**Kilobyte:** One thousand bytes. Abbreviated as K or KB.
**Laptop:** A small, portable computer, also referred to as a notebook.
**Megabyte:** One million bytes. Abbreviated as M or MB.
**Megahertz (MHz):** The way the speed of the microprocessor is measured. A hertz is one "cycle" per second – a megahertz is one million cycles per second.
**Microprocessor (Processor):** Also called the processor or the CPU. The "brain" of the computer – where all calculations take place – which controls and makes possible all the "work" a computer does.
**MMXTM Technology:** A technology that enhances microprocessors by increasing processing power to make for richer multimedia and communication.
**Motherboard:** The computer's main circuit board. It houses the microprocessor and a number of other essential functions and is located in the system unit.
**Mouse:** The device that controls the cursor pointing arrow on the monitor screen allowing you to point and click on items quickly and easily.
**Multimedia:**
The term used to describe a computer's ability, via a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM drive, to process words, sounds, pictures, graphics etc.
**Network:** A number of computers linked together. When a computer is networked it means that it can share other devices with the other computers on the network e.g. a number of computers can share one printer.
**Pixel:** If you look closely at a monitor or TV screen you'll see that it's divided into many tiny "squares" – these squares are called pixels. The "quality" of the picture on a screen is determined by its resolution.
**Port:** The "receptacles" at the back of the console which allow you to plug in peripherals like a printer, phone line and so on.
**RAM:** Random Access Memory. This is the main type of memory storage in a PC. For all intents and purposes you can think of RAM as memory.
**ROM:** Read Only Memory. A special type of memory that cannot be changed, "written on" or deleted.
**Software:** The vast collection of programs that make a computer do whatever it is that you want it to do. The software controls the hardware and makes it run.
**Sound card:** An expansion card that allows your computer to "speak" or play music or other sounds. Necessary for multimedia.
**SVGA:** A Super version of a VGA.
**USB:** Universal Serial Bus. Allows you to plug in external devices (peripherals) like speakers, scanners, printers, modems or additional memory storage devices.
**VIA:** Visible Image Area. Measured diagonally along the monitor screen. i.e. a 15" monitor may have a 13.5" VIA.
**Virus:** A lightweight program capable of wreaking havoc to a computer's hard drive, memory and/or programs. Viruses are often transferred from one "corrupt" system to another when sharing files or downloading files from the Internet, usually unbeknownst to the originator.
**VGA:** Video Graphics Array. What you see on your screen. Used to refer to the quality of a colour monitor.

To find the Compaq authorized reseller nearest you, call 1-800-567-1616, or visit the Compaq Canada website at www.compaq.ca.

*- News Canada*

# Catholics and Protestants support new Christian paper in Ottawa

**Alan Doerksen**

OTTAWA — *Christian News Ottawa* is an unusual paper because Catholics and Protestants have worked together to get it set up. Most Christian magazines and newspapers in Canada are either denominational or have a general Protestant slant.

Lloyd Mackey, who started the paper in spring, was intentional in consulting both Protestants and Catholics about what the paper should be.

Among Mackey's advisors were David Farrell, a Catholic layperson and Justice Department lawyer; Brent Russet, minister of Ottawa's Sunnyside Wesleyan Church; and Wilf Wight, district director for the Canadian Bible Society.

Co-operation between Catholics and Protestants is common in Ottawa, asserts Mackey. "There's been very strong Catholic participation in the Billy Graham mission," he observes. Graham completed a Crusade in Ottawa in late June.

COURTESY LLOYD MACKEY

*Lloyd Mackey*

### Not the first time

Mackey is no stranger to starting newspapers. He is the founding editor of *B.C. Christian News* (formerly *Christian Info News*), which is based in Langley, B.C. More recently, Mackey helped start up a regional Christian paper in the Oshawa-Peterborough-Belleville region of Ontario, and one based in Portland, Oregon, called *Christian News Northwest*. He also helped *Island Christian News*, based in Victoria, through a recent transition.

Mackey first started thinking of starting a paper in Ottawa about 10 years ago, when Leighton Ford was planning to hold a Crusade there. But when the Crusade was canceled, so were plans for the paper. Then about three years ago, Mackey spent three weeks in Ottawa researching the possibility of starting a paper.

"The serious planning started late last year, once it was clear there would be a Billy Graham mission," explains Mackey.

The first issue of *Christian News Ottawa* rolled off the presses March 15, followed by May 15 and late June issues. The latest newspaper was produced to coincide with the Graham Crusade, says Mackey. About 35,000 copies were produced, many of which were available to people attending the crusade. This was up from a run of 12,000 copies for the first issue.

Mackey has met with a strong, positive response to the new paper. "As people become aware, people say this is something we really need," says Mackey. This contrasts with lukewarm reactions Christian papers have drawn in some other cities. For instance, Mackey and others started a Christian newspaper in Toronto about 10 years, but it only published for a few months.

Mackey, who has been based in B.C. for many years, is planning to move to Ottawa with his wife in August. He hopes to publish the paper on a monthly basis, starting in September.

Some start-up costs for the newspaper came from Christian Info Canada (CIC), a charity formerly based in Calgary that is now based in Vancouver.

"It went dormant a few years ago," says Mackey. But then he and others took it over. Through CIC, with the help of donations from interested people in B.C. and Ottawa, Mackey was able to raise start-up funds. Mackey sees in CIC the potential to start other Christian newspapers in Canada as well.

Now that the paper is rolling, finances come in from two other sources. "The advertising provides most of the revenue," explains Mackey. Other funds come from churches willing to pay on a volunteer basis for bulk subscriptions. This follows the model of other newspapers Mackey has helped to start.

Currently, the newspaper is based at the offices of CHRI, a Christian radio station in Ottawa. This helps to cut costs. "Some attempts to develop Christian newspapers in the past have found financial difficulties because the overhead costs were so high," observes Mackey.

### Aspiring to be a 'Citizen'

Mackey describes his goal with *Christian News Ottawa* as being: "to establish a viable newspaper in Ottawa and to develop a [Parliament] Hill-based Christian-oriented news service." The news service will be primarily for other Christian publications, and will consist of columns and news items. In the future, he says, "it could become an interactive news service."

As the newspaper develops, Mackey plans to include columns and opinion pieces. "On the editorial page, we'll always have two [opinion] pieces from leaders in the Christian community," he says.

Besides doing some news writing himself, Mackey accepts stories from several freelancers.

"We see *Christian News Ottawa* as a Christian *Ottawa Citizen*," says Mackey. The newspaper goes "into churches of a great variety of denominations," says Mackey. "We're transdenominational."

Mackey feels comfortable in the setting of Canada's capital because "a lot of my writing over the years has been relating my faith to things political."

# *'Magazine of Christian unrest' sets sail on Internet*

LIVERPOOL, England (EP) — *Ship of Fools*, the Internet's first satirical Christian web magazine, has set sail in cyberspace (http://ship-of-fools.com) and is currently attracting 10,000 "shipmates" a month.

Dubbed "the magazine of Christian unrest," *Ship of Fools"* was first launched in 1977 as a printed publication. Editor Steve Goddard told British journalist Dan Wooding, "Its second incarnation, as a 'webzine' has proved even more successful, winning favorable reviews in the U.K. from *The Times*, *The Guardian*, BBC Radio 1, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Radio Times*, *PC World* and *The Church Times*. In the U.S., *Ship of Fools* received an hour-long feature on the syndicated "Dick Staub Show."

### Walking the plank

Explaining his editorial philosophy, Goddard said, "Christianity that takes itself too seriously, from the po-faced to the gung-ho, walks the plank on a website that, despite its name, doesn't suffer fools gladly."

In addition to biting articles on current topics, regular features include: "Gadgets for God" (including Jerusalem earth sandals with each insole packed with genuine holy soil from Jerusalem); "Mystery Worshipper" (anonymous church service reviews); "The Fruitcake Zone" (links to odd religious Internet sites) and John Calvin's "Newsround" (a digest of "the strangest religious stories on earth").

"We are not so much the enemy within but the friend " explains *Ship of Fools* editor Simon Jenkins. "From a position of commitment, we are trying to look objectively at religious trends in an accessible rather than cynical way. We commend as well as de-bunk."

"It's disappointing that there is still the need for *Ship of Fools*," concludes Goddard. "We had hoped a new generation would come along and show us how it's done. We are bored by the dull conservatism of most Christian periodicals. Our supporters and contributors are very much like us, people who don't fit comfortably in the average pew."

SHIP OF FOOLS

*St. Simeon the Holy Fool, "eccentric, scandalous" patron saint of Ship of Fools who "played the fool to mock the idiocy of the world" and the dead canine he dragged with him into Emesa, Syria, to make his point.*

## News Digest

### Pagans seek acceptance

VILNIUS, Lithuania — The recent five-day World Pagan Congress held in Vilnius, Lithuania, called for pagan unity and appealed for greater tolerance of their beliefs.

Lithuania was the last nation in Europe to be converted to Christianity, around 1400. Since achieving independence in 1991, the predominantly Roman Catholic country has seen a rise in groups advocating pre-Christian beliefs, reports the *Toronto Star*.

### *Book 82 years overdue*

VICTORIA — Eve Lettice had no worries about returning a library book, even though it was 82 years late.

"The book wasn't taken out in my name," explains Lettice. She discovered Stephen Leacock's *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* while cleaning her attic, says the *Globe and Mail*.

The book would carry a $7,200 fine, except for the Greater Victoria Public Library rule of a $12 maximum fine.

### Pin-up priests grace fundraising calendar

JACKSON, Miss. — Good-looking Anglican priests in Mississippi have been recruited as calendar pin-ups in an unconventional church fundraiser, reports *The Living Church* Episcopal newsletter.

Male clergy were photographed — with their clothes on — for the "Dudes of the Diocese" calendar, published as part of a revenue-raising drive for a new building at St. Columb's, Jackson. All the clergy who were pictured wore regular black and white clerical garb.

Diana O'Toole, the church member who dreamt up the scheme, says, "Yes, many of the priests are handsome. Some of the clergy who were not selected gave the ones who were selected a hard time."